

Jordan Times

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ADEN (AP) — Northern and southern cabinet members met Wednesday in Aden to discuss implementation of a reconciliation charter that aims to end political turmoil that has gripped the country and threatened a 4-year-old union. It was the first time that the cabinet has met in Aden, the capital of the former Marxist South Yemen which merged with conservative North Yemen in May 1990. Officials implementing the reconciliation and reform charter, which was signed in Amman on Feb. 20. Vice President Ali Salem Al Beidh, the former leader of South Yemen, had been boycotting all government functions in Sanaa, the capital of the unified country, in protest over the northern domination of power. His power struggle with President Ali Abdullah Saleh had pushed Yemen to the brink of civil war amid a campaign of bombings and political assassinations. The cabinet is headed by Haider Al Attas, a close aide to Mr. Beidh. The unprecedented session in Aden was proposed by the "dialogue committee," a crisis management group of parliamentarians and tribal chiefs that lined up the reconciliation charter.

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Israeli troops clashed in fresh artillery and rocket duels with resistance fighters Wednesday amid reports the United States has stepped in to curb the spiraling violence in South Lebanon. Security sources said Israeli gunners pounded suspected resistance bases with 155-mm howitzer barrages behind repeated strafing assaults by helicopter gunships illuminated by parachute flares. Guerrillas of Hizbollah in turn lobbed 23 Katyusha rockets between midnight (2200 GMT) and daybreak on the enclave Israel occupies as a "security zone," the sources said. The exchange kept thousands of civilians on both sides huddled in basements and bomb shelters, but no fresh casualties were reported, the sources said. They spoke on condition of anonymity. The duels capped two days of escalating violence that Monday killed two Israeli soldiers and four allied militiamen as well as two Lebanese schoolchildren and a third civilian.

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King begins visit to Qatar

Talks with emir focus on Arab unity, peace and bilateral ties

DOHA (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday held talks with the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, on regional and international issues as well as matters of common concern to Jordan and Qatar.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the two leaders, who started their meetings soon after the King's arrival here from Oman, discussed means to achieve Arab solidarity and unity.

Petra said that the two leaders also reviewed the Feb. 26 Hebron massacre, Friday's U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the massacre and "all that it entails on the future of the Arab lands."

Bilateral relations were also reviewed and the two leaders studied means to promote cooperation between Jordan and Qatar, Petra reported.

The talks were attended on the Jordanian side by Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, His Royal Highness Prince Hamzah Ben Al Hussein, the King's advisors Marwan Al Qassem and Khaled Karaki, Chief Islamic Justice Izzeddin Tamimi and other officials.

The Qatari side was represented by the defence and foreign ministers and senior officials.



His Majesty King Hussein is received upon his arrival in Doha on Wednesday by Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani (AFP photo)

The King held a separate meeting with Defence Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani to discuss bilateral relations, Petra said.

Prince Abdullah, who heads Jordan's Special Forces, visited several Qatari army units and met with his Qatari counterpart and senior officers.

The Prince also watched a Qatari military exercise.

King Hussein is on his first visit to Qatar since relations were strained during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

King Hussein was received by Sheikh Khalifa and other dignitaries at Doha airport.

The Gulf crisis, triggered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, had polarised the Arab World.

Jordan, which advocated a negotiated settlement, was ostracised by Gulf states after it opposed the U.S.-led coalition that evicted the Iraqis from Kuwait seven months later.

Qatar and Oman have been the only members of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to reconcile with Jordan.

King Hussein travelled to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage in early March, but Saudi officials, including King Fahd, did not meet with him.

Saudi Arabia leads the GCC, which also includes the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Before the Gulf crisis, King Hussein was a frequent visitor to GCC countries.

Israel, PLO begin Cairo talks seeking agreement

CAIRO (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israeli delegations tried to reach agreement Wednesday on protecting Palestinians in the occupied territories as a way to restart peace talks on Israel's withdrawal from those lands.

The two sides resumed discussions here after two days of talks in Tunis on Palestinian demands for security guarantees following the massacre of dozens of Palestinians in Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque by a Jewish settler.

"We have come here to prevent another Hebron massacre," chief Palestinian delegate Nabil Shaath said before Wednesday's session.

He said progress was made in Tunis and his side was expecting Israel's final answers on tentative agreements reached with Israeli negotiators in the Tunisian capital.

Successful negotiations could lead to a meeting between PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres which, in turn, could restart the overall negotiations that were halted by the Feb. 25 Hebron massacre.

One forum for a Peres-Arafat meeting could be an international conference called by Norway on Thursday in Cairo on organising and financing a Palestinian police force (see page 10).

Yacov Setty, a spokesman for Israel's embassy in Cairo, said Wednesday's negotiations were expected to last late into the night and no announcements were expected before Thursday morning.

Israel's delegation is headed by Major General Amnon Shuhak, who was at the Tunis talks and was Dr. Shaath's counterpart in negotiations stretching back six months and aimed at implementing last September's

by Norway on Thursday in Cairo on organising and financing a Palestinian police force (see page 10).

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Ross assures Assad of U.S. 'commitment' to peace process

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — U.S. Middle East peace coordinator Dennis Ross Wednesday assured President Hafez Al Assad that Washington is committed to achieving an Arab-Israeli peace by year's end.

Speaking to reporters after a four-hour meeting with Mr. Assad, Mr. Ross said America is "committed to do all we can to try to achieve a breakthrough this year."

He said he and Mr. Assad had "good discussions on the next steps of the peace process."

Diplomats said the "discussions covered the recent escalation of violence in South Lebanon, which Syria and Lebanon's pro-Syrian government blame Israel for."

Mr. Ross is touring the Middle East to get the peace process going again after the Arab participants pulled out last month to protest the Feb. 25 Hebron massacre.

Syria, Lebanon and Jordan have agreed in principle to restart talks in Washington next month. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel are discussing conditions for a resumption of talks.

Mr. Ross held talks earlier this week with PLO officials in Tunis. He also visited Egypt and Jordan.

He said he briefed the Syrian leader on last week's visit to

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3 Palestinians killed in Hebron

HEBRON, Occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli troops killed at least three members of the Hamas group during an 18-hour gun battle in Hebron, Chief of Staff Ehud Barak said on Wednesday.

The operation coincided with talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on international protection for the 110,000 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank city where a Jewish settler massacred dozens of worshippers in the Ibrahimi Mosque on Feb. 25.

"(There was) a battle that ended an hour ago. Removal of the remnants of the house

(they were in) has yet to be completed," General Barak told Israel's inquiry into the Feb. 25 Hebron mosque massacre.

"It went on for about 18 hours. Up until now, three... have been killed, perhaps already a fourth — among the most important of the wanted Hamas men from Hebron," he said at the hearings.

Israeli military censors barred news about the operation for a day until Gen. Barak disclosed it in his testimony.

Gen. Barak said a Palestinian woman was killed, apparently by gunfire from the house where the guerrillas

were hiding, and several soldiers were wounded. On Tuesday, Palestinians blamed soldiers for the death of a pregnant Hebron woman.

A Reuters correspondent in Hebron saw a three-storey building blackened by fire after it was repeatedly targeted by Israeli forces. Bulldozers pushed away rubble from two houses that were destroyed.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat telephoned U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Tuesday night to complain about Israeli army operations in the town.

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Israel offers early pullout, little esle

By Lamis K. Andoni in Boston

ISRAEL HAS offered to withdraw its troops from Jericho and the Gaza Strip prior to the scheduled April 13 date, but refused Palestinian demands for a deployment of a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) — run Palestinian police force or international observers in the city of Hebron.

The Israeli offer, presented officially to the PLO this week, was conditional on a Palestinian resumption of negotiations stalled since an Israeli settler slaughtered dozens of Palestinians in Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque on Feb. 25.

But PLO officials said that the Israeli offer fell short of providing minimum protection for the Palestinians and reinforced Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"If Israel does not offer more substantive steps in Cairo (on Thursday) then the PLO will be jeopardising its own legitimacy and the safety of the Palestinians in the occupied territories by resuming the talks," a top-level

Palestinian negotiator told the Jordan Times.

The PLO leadership's final word hinged on the outcome of the Cairo meeting, which Palestinian officials did not expect to change in the light of the results of two days of intensive talks held earlier this week.

Israel also rejected PLO demands for a ban on armed settlers from Hebron.

"We were told that the settlers' issue is a strictly internal (Israeli) affair," a senior PLO official told the Jordan Times.

The PLO was also told by Israeli officials that Israel was not willing to take more steps to contain the settlers than banning two extremist groups and the disarming of 15 settlers who were deemed dangerous.

At a meeting held Tuesday night in Tunis, the PLO leadership decided Israel should offer more security guarantees before the resumption of talks.

But according to Palestinian officials, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat is inclined to accept the Israeli offer if

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Palestinian holding group formally launched; Shaer elected chairman

By Mariam M. Shahin Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A group of prominent businessmen on Wednesday officially launched a \$200 million holding company to invest in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Kamal Shaer, a Jordanian businessman, was elected chairman of the company's 16-member board of directors.

The Palestine Development and Investment Incorporated (PDII) is the first major Arab-led commercial enterprise to be launched since the Sept. 13 signing of the autonomy accord between Israel and the PLO.

"This is a historic day for the economic and developmental future of the occupied territories," said Ahmad Qourie, head of the Economic Department of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), addressing the audience at a ceremony launching PDII at the Amman Chamber of Industry.

The ceremony, followed by

the election of the board of directors, was attended by many of the 141 investors who constitute the financial backbone of much of the Palestinian community in the diaspora. They include Arab Bank Chairman Abdul Hamid Shoman, Hasib Sabbagh, Said Khouri, Munib Masri, Ramzi Dalloul and Abdul Mohsen Qattan.

Several leaders of the Jordanian business community such as Khalil Al Talhouni, Kamal Shaer and Khalidoun Abu Hassan and Jordanian banks such as the Cairo Amman Bank and the Housing Bank are also founding members of the PDII.

The opening was attended by Minister of Information Jawad Anani and Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim as well as Jerusalem-based Palestinian leader and leading peace negotiator Faisal Hussein.

"We, in the occupied territories, welcome this venture

with open arms," Mr. Hussein told the press. He stressed that in view of the economic difficulties and restraints faced by the people in the occupied territories, "all help is welcome."

Mr. Qourie, one of the Palestinian architects behind the Oslo peace accord, said: "Our information indicates that at least 50 per cent of the people in the occupied territories are unemployed; investment in housing and industries will change that."

"We have estimated that we need to build 185,000 housing units in the occupied territories," he added.

The founding members, who have thus far contributed just over half of the capital, or \$100 million, say they hope to raise another \$100 million.

"In another six to eight months the number of founding investors could reach up to 300 or more and the capital

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Barak defends shooting orders

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's military chief, testifying before the commission of inquiry into the Hebron mosque massacre, on Wednesday defended special restrictions on opening fire on Jewish settlers and the decision to arm Jewish settlers.

"The legal situation... is there is no use of arms against Israelis in enforcing the law," said Major General Ehud Barak, the highest-ranking official to appear so far.

Gen. Barak said past experience showed "it is reasonable to assume an Israeli used a gun he received from the army in self-defence. A local Arab who

used his gun, reasonably, might have fired at an Israeli or one of his own people."

But he maintained that earlier witnesses, who interpreted the orders as a sweeping ban on shooting Jews even to stop a massacre, misunderstood the rule.

"The way it was described here is absurd... if a soldier sees an Israeli shooting at others (he) is allowed to take any reasonable means to stop the crime," Gen. Barak said. "Perhaps in some briefing some misunderstanding was created."

Defending the decision to issue 9,000 automatic rifles to

settlers, Gen. Barak said: "To my awareness, there is no law to protect 120,000 settlers without allowing them to carry arms for self-defence."

He noted that in the 12 years Jews were allowed to carry arms into the Ibrahimi Mosque where the massacre took place, "there was no case of clashes causing loss of life."

The commission is investigating claims that troops did not do enough to stop settler Baruch Goldstein from shooting to death dozens of Palestinian worshippers on Feb. 25. Goldstein was stopped only when worshippers beat him to death.

Pandora's box of drug abuse opened in Jordan

By Rana Sabbagh Reuters

AMMAN — Behind what had been a veil of denial, some of Jordan's rich abused tranquilisers and heroin while poorer souls sniffed glue, paint or even fumes of burnt ants.

The curtain was lifted when King Hussein, ruler of this conservative Muslim Kingdom, shocked his fellow countrymen by stating recently that Jordan has a drug problem.

He said United Nations figures showed the Kingdom had 7,000 drug abusers, hooked mainly on tranquilisers but also heroin.

"We are either ashamed or we are unable to talk about this problem and start finding solutions, be it through tougher measures against smugglers and dealers or setting up centres to treat addicts and save them," he said.

"But to remain shy and to keep silent, in my view, is a mistake we are committing

against ourselves and our children."

Rich families spend tens of thousands of dollars to treat addicted relatives abroad to avoid scandal. The poor, sniffing anything that got them high, were simply ignored.

"It makes them feel high and euphoric. They say this is the only way they find happiness," said a social worker who found poor children inhaling the smoke of burning ants.

The King's speech criticising Parliament for neglecting crucial issues, opened a Pandora's box. Officials, who for years maintained that drugs seized in Jordan were destined for abroad, began sounding alarms.

The ensuing debate showed ignorance about the size of the problem and the need for centres to help addicts wanting to break habits ranging from alcohol to heroin.

"We never encouraged anyone to talk about the drug problem in Jordan due to many factors, some of them

cultural," U.S.-trained sociologist Dr. Sabri Rbeihat said. "People try to sweep their dirt under the carpet."

As rapid social changes, coupled with poverty and unemployment, increased drug abuse, officials in Jordan were silent.

"The country never admitted we had a drug problem until people in higher places admitted that," Dr. Rbeihat said. "We need to define the problem, know more about the characteristics of people using it, where drugs come from... and on control, prevention and rehabilitation."

Colonel Hisham Ensour, Jordan's anti-narcotics chief, said drug abuse had increased alarmingly in the past three years. In 1993 his agency added 430 names to the list of 818 addicts accumulated over the last decade.

"These figures do not reflect the actual size of the problem because the number of addicts that are still at large is very big and in all parts of the country," he added.

The agency seized 4,099 kilos of hashish in 1993, compared to 875 kilos in 1983. But Dr. Ensour said he was more concerned by the rise in abuse by both men and women of tranquilisers and stimulants widely available as medicine.

Arteme, used to treat Parkinson's disease, a nervous disorder marked by a muscle rigidity, became a street drug in 1993, prompting authorities to add it to its monitored narcotics list.

Heroin addiction had been a habit acquired abroad. But Walid Sarhan, a psychiatrist who has helped hundreds of Arab addicts since 1982, said in 1989 men with no links to other countries began seeking treatment.

"I sounded the alarm bell then, when an escalating number of heroin addicts began coming to see me, mostly groups of 10 to 12 youngsters," said the 40-year-old doctor trained in London.

He said a police crackdown on dealers had cut the number of addicts and each gram

me now sells at JD 30 depending on its quality — a large sum in a country where a civil servant earns around JD 120 a month.

After the King's speech, Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas unveiled plans to set up Jordan's first government-run addiction treatment centre. Amman wants British help to train staff and is seeking German funds to help pay for the \$2.8 million centre.

In the past addicts avoid the Kingdom's only detoxification ward, situated in a mental hospital, because it lacks staff and rehabilitation schemes.

Police are setting up a 17-bed centre to treat addicts and will pardon anyone who admits drug abuse and goes to a rehabilitation centre.

Dr. Sarhan said he was building his own psychiatric hospital, with an addiction wing that could treat patients from neighbouring Arab states that still have Jordan's previous reticence to discuss the problem.

German ship turned away in tightened interceptions of Aqaba-bound vessels

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A German vessel denied entry to Aqaba was on its way Wednesday to another port in the Red Sea to unload part of its cargo to meet the demands of the U.S.-led enforcers of the international sanctions against Iraq, shipping officials said.

The 13,000-tonne Skyman, carrying 3,000 tonnes of general cargo for Jordan, is the second Aqaba-bound vessel to be turned away this month and the seventh to be intercepted and delayed this year, said Sufian Muhsen, manager of the Jordan Shipping Agents Association.

The Red Sea Energy, operated by a consortium of British, German and French companies, was turned away last week after the inspectors found two 20-foot containers carrying zinc phosphorate for Iraq.

The inspectors' decision came despite documents attesting U.N. Sanctions Committee approval for the consignment of the chemical, used in the detergent industry, shipping sources said.

As a rule, anything classified as "chemicals" come under close scrutiny of the inspectors. In many cases, entry to Aqaba

is categorically denied. The interceptions came against intensified moves by the government to alleviate the negative impact of the sanctions enforcement on Jordan's economy and a call by Parliament for the Kingdom to refuse to return to the American-backed Arab-Israeli peace talks until the "siege of Aqaba" is lifted.

Information Minister Jawad Anani told reporters after talks with U.S. Middle East peace coordinator Dennis Ross late Tuesday that Mr. Ross had promised to consider Jordan's grievances over the continuing blockade, which is severely hampering the Kingdom's maritime operations and trade.

The stepped-up interceptions of ships entering the Gulf of Aqaba come amid follow-up efforts to a proposal to move the inspection of cargo to the port from the Tiran Straits where it is taking place now.

The proposal was expected to have been discussed by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Dr. Anani during their meeting with Mr. Ross.

Under the proposal, an independent international agency, most probably Lloyds Register of London, will inspect all incoming and outgoing cargo at the port for violations of the international sanctions against

Iraq instead of the multinational naval task force led by American warships now patrolling the Red Sea.

Contacts are continuing among Jordanian, American and U.N. officials as well as representatives of Lloyds Register on various aspects of the proposed arrangement, sources said. However, no one could provide any definite information as to the progress achieved.

Independent land-based inspections by an international agency, from the Jordanian viewpoint, will remove all hurdles that shipowners cite to justify higher freight charges to and from Aqaba to buffer extra costs incurred as a result of the delays caused by inspections at sea.

At present, Jordanian importers pay \$500 per 20-foot container and \$1,000 per 40-foot container over and above the regular freight charges to Aqaba. The surcharge for non-containerised cargo is around \$15 per tonne.

In addition are extra costs paid by importers to bring their cargo to Aqaba if the original ships carrying them are forced to offload them at other Red Sea ports.

"Cargo inaccessibility," one

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U.S. supports Algerian president call for dialogue

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States is blaming Islamic extremists for a deepening "climate of fear and intimidation" in Algeria while also backing the military installed president's call for a dialogue with opponents.

Some members of Congress, however, want to step-up pressure on the country where the military cancelled a January 1992 parliamentary election the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) poised to win.

The chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa, Harry Johnston, accused the Clinton administration of inconsistency in its policy towards democratic failures in Africa, noting the stricter steps taken against Nigeria.

Mark R. Parris, acting assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, told the subcommittee Islamic fundamentalist groups have "steadily intensified their campaign to overthrow the secular regime through violence."

He noted daily attacks on security personnel, the takeover of certain Algerian neighbourhoods and the assault on a prison in central Algeria that freed more than 900 prisoners earlier this month.

"A climate of fear and intimidation has deepened in recent months as extremists have assassinated dozens of Algerian political figures, journalists, academics and other civilians as well as over 30 foreigners," Mr. Parris said at a hearing.

"This wave of terrorism suggests that extremists are gradually eclipsing moderates in Algeria's loosely organised and disparate Islamic movement," the official said.

Mr. Parris also noted that the government has imprisoned more than 2,000 people suspected of Islamist activities or sympathies, many without trial, but he said human rights abuses have been committed on all sides.

He said Algeria's crisis is "home-grown and home-nurtured," rejecting suggestions that Sudan or Iran may be fomenting the violence.

Mr. Parris praised President Liamine Zeroual, a retired army general who was installed as president two months ago, for pledging to open a political dialogue and calling for economic reforms.

"We agree with these priorities, and we would like to see Algeria succeed in implementing the course which the president has stalked out," Mr. Parris said.



Lamine Zeroual

But he cautioned that all factions must be included in the dialogue and noted that past stated intentions of the Algerian government to undertake reforms have seen little progress.

Mr. Parris said U.S. influence over Algeria is limited, since there is little direct aid. The government's Export-Import Bank, however, has provided guarantees for more than \$2 billion in private bank loans for Commodity Credit Corporation has made loans available to Algeria.

Mr. Parris said suspension of these benefits would not work as leverage against the Algerian regime, since they would hurt U.S. businesses more than Algeria.

Massive march

Widows and women's groups led tens of thousands in a march in Algiers Tuesday to vent their anger at assassinations and threats against unveiled women in Muslim fundamentalist insurgency.

"Too much blood, too many tears, together we can save Algeria," chanted the mostly student-age protesters, carrying banners of people slain.

Women have dignity, and won't accept shame," said the mixed crowd, with few of the women wearing veils.

Heavy police protection was arranged for the officially sanctioned protest in the hills of the capital. Government radio said 150,000 people turned out, while independent estimates put the figure at about 50,000.

The march began outside the school of fine arts, headed by widow Farida Asselah, her husband, the school's director, and their 22-year-old son were assassinated inside the building March 5.

Banners read "No to dialogue with the terrorists," "Where is the government," and "Give us weapons."

The one-kilometre march ended at Place Addis Ababa in front of the government's National Observatory for Human Rights.

Other rallies were organised Tuesday in the western port of Oran, the eastern port of Annaba and three other cities. Militants have targeted journalists, public officials, intellectuals and foreigners in their fight to bring down the army-led government.

In an "open letter" to President Zeroual, the women's groups said they "reject exile, submission and compromise."

Rally leaders also rejected "any dialogue with the Islamic Salvation Front."

Security forces killed 190 suspected activists and arrested 167 in the first three weeks of march, the official news agency APS said.

APS said the figure included 64 fugitives slain and 109 arrested after they escaped from the top security prison at Tazoult near Batna in eastern Algeria on March 10.

Algerian newspapers have reported that 900 prisoners escaped in an attack on the prison by armed men who brought a fleet of 40 trucks to move them and who had the complicity of guards who opened the gates.

Militants abroad said 1,700 people escaped, many of them fundamentalists who had been condemned to death or who had been sentenced to life imprisonment.

Two Frenchmen killed

An armed group has killed two Frenchmen in an attack at their home outside the capital, security forces said Wednesday.

The slayings Tuesday night bring to 30 the number of foreigners killed since September when extremists began targeting foreigners as part of their violent campaign to topple the military-backed government. Of the 30, eight were French.

Security forces identified the victims as Roger Michel Drouaier and his son Michel Valery, 24. The announcement said the two worked for a private company in Algeria.

They were killed in a 10:30 p.m. knife attack by five men who broke into their home in Birkhadem, a southern Algiers suburb, security forces said. Details of the attack were not immediately available.

Lawyers insist Kuwait court has no power to try exminister

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Defence lawyers are insisting a Kuwaiti criminal court has no jurisdiction to try former Oil Minister Sheikh Ali Khalifa Al Sabah and four others on charges of making illegal profits.

The lawyers reiterated there were political dimensions surrounding the case involving one of the most senior members of the ruling Sabah family to be accused in a criminal trial.

"This case has taken on dimensions that exceed the courtroom, political dimensions," said Bader Jassam Al Yacoub, a lawyer for Hassan Qabazard, one of the defendants.

"When we stress non-jurisdiction (of the court), we are not avoiding the decision of the law. We are keen on its implementation," said Mr. Yacoub, a former minister of information.

The lawyers, who argue criminal courts have no jurisdiction in cases involving ex-ministers, elaborated technical arguments supporting their previously submitted request that the case be transferred to a special court.

The court agreed to rule on the request at its next hearing on May 3.

Sheikh Ali and four others are charged with making illegal profits from state-owned Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC).

The other four — former KOTC Chairman Abdul Fatah Al Badr, former Deputy KOTC Chairman for Financial Affairs Hassan Qabazard and former KOTC officials Nasim Mohsen, a Jordanian, and Timothy Stafford, a Briton — face further charges of embezzlement and forging documents.

A judicial official has said the case going before the court alleges "wrongdoing" involving about \$100 million.

Sheikh Ali denies all charges.

Mr. Qabazard has denied carrying out an embezzlement operation but has admitted acquiring money from KOTC operations on the instructions from his then superior, Mr. Badr.

Officials say they believe Sheikh Ali, chief architect of Kuwait's worldwide oil empire, is the first ex-cabinet

Kuwait deputies pass \$11.7 billion arms budget

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's parliament on Tuesday passed a bill authorising expenditure of 3.5 billion dinars (\$11.7 billion) on arms purchases and military training over the next decade.

The move by the opposition-dominated assembly marks the end of an informal eight-month freeze on arms procurement by the affluent Gulf state of 1.5 million people.

Deputies voted 35-0 with 14 abstentions after a five-hour debate in camera on an issue that has at times caused strains between the government and a variety of outspoken opponents in the 60-seat chamber. Eleven deputies were not present.

"The priority will be given for the weapons that the Kuwaiti army wants to possess and those are many weapons that I would not reveal," Defence Minister Sheikh Ali Al Salem Al Sabah.

"I am not at liberty to give you more information about it but we will be looking at all defence equipments to safeguard our country."

The bill now goes to the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, for approval, a process that normally takes a few weeks.

Parliament, reviewing all decrees laws issued in the six years following its 1986 dissolution, last year asked its financial committee to review a 1992 decree law that set aside the 3.5 billion dinars for major weapons purchases between 1992-2004.

The decree was issued by the emir shortly before October 1992 elections that produced the present parliament.

The government, in response to a request by deputies concerned about alleged corruption in defence contracts, in August agreed not to spend any more of the allocation until parliament had decided whether to pass the law or reject it.

At that point a total of 6 billion dinars (\$5.3 billion) had been either spent or committed.

Parliament chose neither to approve nor reject the decree law instead it approved a bill similar to the decree but for a clause requiring the spending to be stated in the budget.

Major arms purchases, among other items like state investment flows, are not normally reflected in the budget.

Much of the spent money relates to weapons deals made under a defence pact Kuwait signed with the United States after it helped eject Iraqi troops from the emirate in February 1991.

Veteran opposition leaders Abdullah Al Nibari, who abstained, said that by passing the bill the assembly had lost a chance to influence defence procurement.

Some deputies had wanted to withhold approval of the bill to pressure the government to explain in detail to the assembly the need for various major weapons purchases.

"Unfortunately the chance has slipped our hands to have authority on the military expenditure," Mr. Nibari said.

"The worry of the average citizen is about spending money or using this expenditure without being able to use the weapons. I am afraid that this is still possible," said Mr. Nibari.

Several opposition deputies say they are worried that large sums of money are being spent on an array of high-technology weaponry that the 13,000-strong military might not be ready to use.

Kuwait wants speedy claim reimbursement

GENEVA (R) — Kuwait has asked the United Nations to give priority to its \$1 billion claim for the cost of extinguishing oil well fires that swept the Gulf state when Iraq's occupation forces were driven out.

Abdul Rahman Al Houty, chairman of the Kuwait Public Authority, also called for greater pressure on Baghdad to persuade it to fully implement 1991 Gulf war ceasefire resolutions, including contributions to a reparations fund.

In a speech to the U.N. compensation commission on Monday, he said countries holding frozen Iraqi funds, as well as proceeds from Iraqi petroleum sales, should be handed over to the commission and to other U.N. humanitarian agencies.

Mr. Houty urged the commission to appoint experts to assess a claim against Iraq filed by Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC) last July to cover the cost of cleaning up oil fires sparked during the Gulf war in January 1991.

"The losses suffered by Kuwait as a result of damage inflicted by Iraq to Kuwait's oil resources and industry, which are the major source of revenue, were among the most notorious and injurious of all the many street losses suffered as a result of Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation," Mr. Houty said.

"The appointment of a panel of commissioners to review this claim would be viewed by Kuwait as a particularly significant step forward within the context of the claims process," he said.

Iraq should also bear the heavy administrative and legal costs of processing the claims, he added.

The text of Mr. Houty's speech to the governing council of the commission, meeting behind closed-doors in Geneva through Wednesday, was obtained by Reuters.

The council is composed of the same 15 member states as those on the Security Council. The commission has already

received more than \$125 billion worth of claims from civilians, corporations and governments for damages resulting from Iraq's invasion and occupation.

Funded by private and governmental donations, it lacks funds to pay out even a fraction of the claims.

Commission officials hope to make awards in May of between \$3 and \$5 million to a small number of people proving serious injury or death of a close relative.

At its session this week, the council was expected to extend by three months the deadlines for filing corporate and governmental claims, according to U.N. sources.

The deadline for submitting corporate claims would be pushed back to July 1 from April 1, while the deadline for filing government claims would become August 1 instead of May 1.

Kuwait has submitted 26 corporate claims and 11 claims on behalf of various governmental groups, according to Mr. Houty.

The U.N. Security Council last week maintained its economic sanctions against Iraq, including an oil embargo. The decision, tied to Baghdad's cooperation on dismantling its weapons of mass destruction, is reviewed every 60 days.

Under a separate U.N. resolution, Iraq is allowed a one-time sale of \$1.6 billion worth of oil which would go to U.N. coffers. But so far Baghdad has refused to comply.

"Iraq is still wilfully refraining from implementing the U.N. Security Council resolutions that would allow for an appropriate funding of the compensation fund and for the payment of compensation to the victims of the Iraqi aggression," Mr. Houty told the commission's steering body.

"It is our belief that more international pressure should be put on Iraq for the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular the funding resolutions."

Syria and Bahrain call for Arab solidarity, cooperation

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria and Bahrain called Tuesday for Arab solidarity and coordination against new international and regional developments.

The call came in a joint statement winding up a visit to Syria by Bahrain's Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa.

The statement also called for the restoration of Israeli-occupied Arab territories, including the Golan Heights.

Sheikh Isa, who arrived in Damascus Sunday, held three rounds of talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on boosting bilateral relations.

The oil-rich Gulf states, including Bahrain, have increased aid to Syria since Mr. Assad sided with the U.S.-led coalition that reversed Iraq's August 1990 occupation of Kuwait.

Tuesday's statement said that Bahrain and Syria condemned the Feb. 25 Hebron massacre in which dozens of Muslim worshippers were killed by an Israeli settler.

The statement said Mr. Assad had accepted an invitation to visit Bahrain at a date to be agreed later.

The joint statement issued shortly before the Bahraini leader left said both believed that unity would allow Arabs to regain their lost lands and rights.

"The revival of Arab unity and solidarity is necessary to

confront international developments and to enable Arabs to regain all the occupied Arab lands including Arab Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan," the statement said.

Presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh said the two leaders discussed the Arab-Israeli peace process and supported the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

"President Assad stressed during the talks Syria's keen interest to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region in accordance with U.N. resolutions," Mr. Kourieh said.

The Bahraini emir was seen off at the airport by Mr. Assad.

Mr. Kourieh said the talks also covered the Damascus Declaration signed over two years ago by Syria and Egypt and the Gulf Cooperation Council, of which Bahrain is a member.

The agreement called for economic and military cooperation among the eight allies who joined a multinational force which drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in February 1991 after seven months of occupation.

The ministers of interior, agriculture, communications and information who accompanied the emir had separate talks with their Syrian counterparts.

Expatriates put at one-third of Gulf residents

DUBAI (R) — Expatriates in the oil states of the Gulf account for more than one-third of residents despite a high annual growth rate of three per cent in local Arab populations, experts said on Tuesday.

A rare detailed breakdown of population in the six Gulf Arab oil states by demographer Robert Edwards put the total at 23.85 million, of which expatriates accounted for 8.34 million.

Mr. Edwards told a conference on consumer markets in the Gulf organised by the London-based Middle East Economic Digest that apart from Saudi Arabia, the figures were for 1993. The Saudi figures were based on an official 1992 census.

The breakdown based on official figures and estimates by Mr. Edwards' Dubai-based demography consultants

show expatriates in the population ranging from lows of 26.7 per cent in Oman and 27.2 in Saudi Arabia to 74.6 per cent in Qatar and 75 per cent in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Mr. Edwards said doubts about Saudi Arabia's 1992 census figure which showed a local population of 12.3 million of 16.9 million residents were not justified because it reflected the country's tremendous expansion over the past few years.

Sceptics say that were the figures to be believed, the population would have been rising at an incredible seven per cent a year in the 18 years since 1974 when the previous census put the total at seven million.

Mr. Edwards said anyone who has lived in the Gulf for the past decade and seen the expansion at first hand would

not find it difficult to believe the higher numbers. "I do not find it implausible," he said.

Figures for expatriate residents are rarely made public by some governments sensitive to local fears that home-grown populations were being increasingly swamped by foreigners.

But the picture is not all bleak.

Although exact comparisons for previous years were not available, the proportion of expatriates to locals in Bahrain fell to 32.1 per cent in 1993 from 45.8 per cent in 1981, and in Kuwait to 56.5 per cent from 70 per cent before Iraq's 1990 invasion.

The proportion rose slightly in the UAE to 75 per cent in 1993 from 74.4 per cent in 1985. It rose in Qatar to 74.6 per cent from 67.7 in 1986.

No previous figures were

given for Saudi Arabia and Oman, the two countries with least to worry about.

Another expert, Tony Rhodes of Cyprus-based Consultancy-Membris International, said an annual growth rate of three per cent in the local populations in the six Gulf states was among the highest in the world.

He said that if the trend continued, and he saw no reason to believe it would not

do so, the number of nationals in the Gulf Arab states would double in less than 20 years.

"In the context of stagnating populations and markets in most of the developed world, the prospect of a potential market size doubling in less than 20 years is mouth-watering," he told an audience of mostly expatriate businessmen.

The following table shows a breakdown by Mr. Edwards of Gulf populations by country at the end of 1993 (in thousands).

	Total	Locals	Expats	Expats
Bahrain	560	380	180	32.1
Kuwait	1,470	640	830	56.5
Oman	2,020	1,480	540	26.7
Qatar	590	150	440	74.6
Saudi Arabia	16,900	12,300	4,600	27.2
UAE	2,310	560	1,750	75.8
Total	23,850	15,510	8,340	100.0

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 7311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
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19:15 Renouveau
19:30 News in Hebrew
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TOURING SOCIAL SERVICE CENTRE: Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Wednesday visits Irbid social services centres where she was familiarised with their activities and programmes. The Princess toured classrooms of the centre's kindergartens, which were developed by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and was acquainted with educational methods there. Princess Basma also checked on the progress of a workshop organised for pioneering rural women at the centre by the Jordanian Family Planning and Protection Society. She visited the centres training and production workshops and met with trainees who have benefited from the centre's services. Princess Basma later toured a rural market organised by the centre. On display there are products of projects carried out by the centre, in addition to popular and folkloric items.



JVA finishes study of proposed dam

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) has recently concluded a study on the proposed construction of Al Karameh Dam which will have an overall capacity of 55 million cubic metres of water, according to JVA sources.

The sources said the dam, which will collect flood waters during winter will provide irrigation water for lands around Al Karameh area in the central Jordan Valley.

The project, said the sources, will be carried out by an international company at a total cost of JD 52 million beginning in April.

Earlier statements by JVA

Secretary General Ibrahim Wishah said the tender to carry out the project was awarded to Salini Italy, an Italian construction firm.

He said the 40-metre high dam, which is expected to be built in 42 months, is designed to irrigate 40,000 dunums.

When completed, the dam would become Jordan's second largest dam after the King Talal Dam with a capacity of more than 80 million cubic metres.

JVA sources said the authority had also established several projects to enable it to use underground water for irrigation and improve the quality of

available water.

They added that the JVA has also embarked on a housing project in Wadi Araba area, which entails the construction of 84 housing units in four different locations.

In addition, the authority has also started on Al Arasani Road project, which runs along the Jordan River and will be used to reduce traffic on the Jordan Valley main road, they said.

The sources added that the authority has also finalised studies and designs on the Wihdah Dam project which will become the biggest water

project in Jordan. This dam, they said, will play a central role in dealing with water shortage problems.

Planned with a total capacity of 250 million cubic metres of water, it will be built at a total cost of JD213 million. The dam site on the Yarmouk River, will allow its water to be shared by Jordan and Syria.

The sources said the authority plans also to set up small dams in Mujib and Hassa valleys to be used for irrigation in the southern Jordan Valley region and to supply water to the Jordan Potash Company on the southern tip of the Dead Sea.

Seven political parties demand government's cooperation, aid

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Seven Jordanian political parties Wednesday requested that the government consult with them and all other licensed parties on matter of national interest and allocate funds and provide facilities to help political groups conduct their activities.

Secretary General of the Democratic Party for Progress in Jordan Ali Amer told the Jordan Times that a five-member group led by himself made the requests in a memorandum to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali at a meeting at the Prime Ministry and received assurances that the government would do all it could to respond to the demands.

It is regrettable that the government has been overlooking the political parties and avoiding any consulta-

tions with them concerning such important issues as the new election law, the peace negotiations with Israel and the sales tax, the memorandum said.

It said the parties in Jordan look forward to fruitful cooperation with the government in such matters with a view to offering better services to the nation.

The memorandum demanded that Jordan Radio and Television, the Jordan News Agency and the Press and Publications Department give coverage of political parties' activities and that the Minister of Parliamentary and Legal Affairs be renamed as the Ministry of Parliamentary and Political Parties Affairs so that it can cooperate with the country's groups.

Furthermore, the memorandum said, political parties were facing financial constraints and were in need of

government assistance; a practice, it said, which is followed by many nations including Morocco and Tunisia.

The memorandum demanded that the government issue other facilities including:

- Exempting public contributions to parties from income tax; exempting parties' purchases of furniture and other equipment from any fees and customs duty;
- Publishing official government advertisements in political parties' newspapers;
- And offering political parties loans for development.

In the memorandum, the parties stressed their keenness to play a meaningful role in building the country and serving the nation in line with the provisions of the Jordanian Constitution and the National Charter.

The prime minister was

quoted as saying that the government was in the process of implementing a new programme which takes into account the parties views in different matters.

The government welcomes all views and proposals which could contribute to serving higher national interests, said Dr. Majali.

In addition to Mr. Amer, the following party secretaries general attended the meeting with the prime minister: Yaqoub Zayadin, Talal Ramah, Arafat Al Ashhab and Mohammad Qasem.

The seven parties signing the memorandum were People's Unionist Party, The Democratic Party for Progress in Jordan, The Jordan Communist Party, The Jordan Socialist Democratic Party, The Unionist Arab Democratic Party, The Arab Baath Socialist Party and the Jordan People's Democratic Party.

Business group plans trade meeting in Paris

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian businessmen's Association (JBA) is preparing for a meeting to be held in Paris in May to promote Franco-Jordanian trade relations and discuss cooperation between businesspersons in France and Jordan, according to JBA President Ibrahim Zein.

The two-day meeting entitled "Scopes of Economic cooperation between Jordan and France," will be attended by more than 100 businesspersons from both sides, Mr. Zein said.

The delegations will also address prospects for cooperation in the tourism industry, he added.

One of the working papers to be reviewed with details of means of boosting trade and services exchanges between Jordan and France and simplifying economic procedures that obstruct the development of international trade, Mr. Zein said.

He said a second paper will address French investments in Jordan and a third will focus on financial operations to ensure continued investments.

The Jordanian and French attendees will also hold individual talks on matters of mutual concern.

Mr. Zein, who chairs a special meeting preparatory committee, said the panel includes representatives of the ministries of Industry and Trade, Planning and Foreign Affairs.

He added that the meeting should help Jordanian businesspersons in probing the European Union (EU) markets and help Jordan benefit from European systems of marketing products in the European markets. He said there were "big opportunities for the Kingdom's exports of agricultural products and handicrafts to European markets in exchange for joint investment schemes and the transfer of modern technology to Jordan."

Local NGOs, Canada to explore cooperation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Representatives of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Jordanian non-governmental (NGO) and voluntary organisations meet today (Thursday) to explore prospects for cooperation in voluntary work and rural development.

Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), which is organising the meeting, said the meeting will give the invited groups an opportunity to outline their programme and projects and seek financial assistance from CIDA which has financed several of NHF projects.

Head of the Middle East desk of the NGO division at CIDA Norman Cook Wednesday was briefed on NHF's activities and projects at a meeting with In'am Mufti, adviser to Her Majesty Queen Noor on NHF development, planning and international relations.

In outlining the foundation's efforts, Mrs. Mufti said NHF has been contributing to the development process in Jordan through programme and schemes aimed at combating poverty and unemployment and creating new job opportunities.

Mrs. Mufti said the foundation has adopted the concept of encouraging self-reliance through its programme, which aim at developing

local communities by focusing on the status of women and children and endeavouring to develop and promote cultural and educational heritage in Jordan.

Accompanied by Mrs. Cook, the CIDA official watched a slide show presented by Sima Bahous, NHF's communications and development specialist, on the foundation's various projects that indirectly benefit half a million people.

Mr. Cook toured NHF's Jordan Design and Trade Centre, which was established to develop traditional handicrafts and train individuals in traditional trades, helping them to market their products locally and abroad.

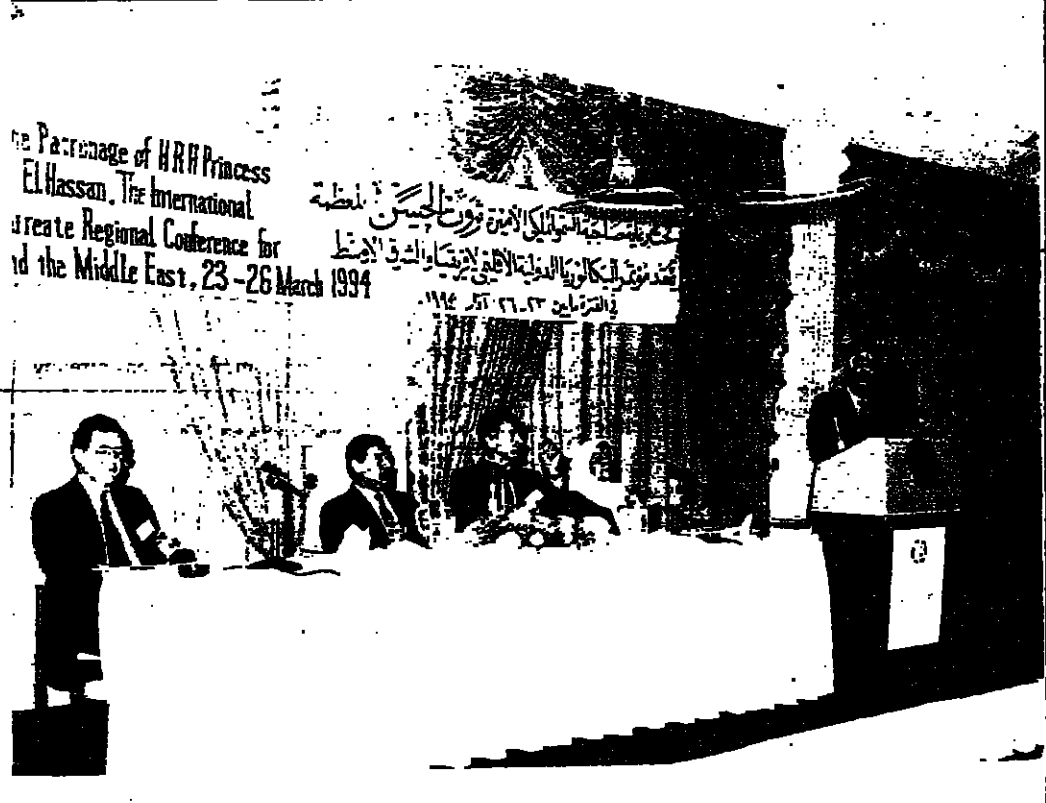
Accompanied later on a visit to Sweimeh village in the South Shuneh area near the Dead Sea, Mr. Cook toured a "Quality of Life Project" in the rural region. The project is one of 12 such NHF projects in the Kingdom.

Mr. Cook met local community leaders and several project beneficiaries as well as health team which provides health services to the community.

Accompanied by Isam Zawawi, the "Quality of Life Project" director, Mr. Cook toured a fish ponds project, a goat-breeding scheme and a home garden agricultural production project; all schemes initiated and supervised by the foundation to benefit the local community.

TEACHING VALUES AND CULTURE:

Mahmoud Al Sharif, former minister of information, Wednesday addresses the opening session of the International Baccalaureate Regional Conference for Africa and the Middle East. The theme of the four-day meeting is "Values and Culture: An Arab and Islamic Perspective." A total of 180 representatives of Baccalaureate schools in Jordan, Arab and foreign countries are taking part in the discussions and reviewing working papers on school curricula. They will also hold workshops to discuss the teaching of Arabic, English, Arab and Islamic history, chemistry, mathematics as well as cooperation among Baccalaureate schools (Petra photo)



Trio Scholl in recital

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — After the superb performance of the piano and cello duo of Rita Medjimorec and Florian Kitt in a memorable concert last January in Amman, the National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Austrian embassy in Amman have invited Trio Scholl to play for music lovers.

Three talented Austrian ladies, Inge Scholl-Kremmel on guitar, her daughter Gundula Scholl on violin and Angela Lehner-Wieternik on flute and guitar will perform at the Forte Grand Hotel on Friday and Saturday March 25 and 26.

Inge Scholl-Kremmel, the founder of the ensemble, is a renowned guitarist, whose main fields of interest in music are baroque and con-

temporary compositions. Gundula Scholl also specialises in baroque and studied at the Vienna Music Academy with Hertha Binder.

Angela Lehner-Wieternik is as comfortable with a guitar as she is with a flute. She graduated in both instruments.

The Scholl trio, also known as "Musica Dolce Wien", regularly performs at home and has released a compact disc "Chamber Music for Flute, Violin and Guitar."

The trio will play pieces by Williams, Telemann, Schmelzer, Haydn, Carulli and, naturally, Mozart.

The guitar, flute and violin blend is particularly pleasing. The result often is very subtle, light and refined music. The Austrian ensemble has all it takes to illustrate and confirm this definition.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent congratulates Tunisian president

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the Regent, Wednesday sent a cable to Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, congratulating him on his reelection as president. Prince Mohammad wished Mr. Ben Ali good health and happiness and the Tunisian people further progress and prosperity.

Habitat preparatory meeting ends

AMMAN (Petra) — A Pan-Arab meeting held in Amman to prepare for the participation in an international habitat conference Wednesday urged Arab states to set up their own national commissions to prepare for and contribute to a joint Arab paper on human settlements for submission to the 1996 conference. A statement issued at the end of the final session of the three-day meeting called on Arab states and the Arab League to take part in force in the coming conference to be held in Istanbul, and in an international preparatory conference in Geneva next month. The participants in the meeting called on the Arab Housing Ministers Council to step up its contacts and cooperation with world organisations in the course of helping Arab states prepare their national papers on habitat. They also endorsed several recommendations on the human settlements sector in the Arab World. The meeting, which was organised by the Arab League in cooperation with the Amman-based office of the U.N. Centre for Human Settlements, was attended by delegations from 14 Arab countries, six non-governmental organisations (NGO) and U.N. agencies operating in Jordan.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artists Husam Khader and Rahim Al Shaykhi at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Jordanian-Iraqi contemporary exhibition by over 80 artists at Ain Art Gallery in Wadi Saqra (9:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 644451).
- ★ Exhibition by Syrian artists Abdul Manan Shamma, Khalid Almuz, and Mamdoh Khashan at Ab'saad Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Jordanian sculptor Samer Tabbaa. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Writers Do Draw" by Jamal Naji, Ibrahim Nasrallah, and Farouq Wadi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by Syrian artists Abdul Qader Azzouz and Aoun Al Droubi at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).
- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Turki Abdullah at the Baladina Art Gallery.
- ★ Drama entitled "A Very Symbolic Play" at the main theatre at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Drama entitled "Antigone" at the studio theatre at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
- ★ Video film in English entitled "Sewrat", accompanied by commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khalid Khreis, at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
- ★ Film entitled "White Hunter, Black Heart" at the American Center on Thursday at 5:00 p.m. (110 minutes).
- ★ Trio scholl (flute, guitar, and violin) will be presented at the Forte Grand Hotel on Friday at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Seminar on sales tax by Mr. Laith Shubailat, Dr. Fahd Al Faneq, and Mr. Imad Al Shuja' at the Chamber of Commerce on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

Attention Attention

TO Businessmen Importers, Exporters Shipping Agents Bankers, Commercial Attaches

Horizon Cultural Center have the pleasure to announce the starting of a course in ucp 500 (Uniform Custom and Practice for Documentary Credits) which was applied in Jan. 1, 1994.

TEL.: 681628

CONGRATULATIONS EDGALLO ALFRED KHOURY

wishing the people of Pakistan more progress and prosperity on the occasion of **PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL DAY**

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR AL HUSSEIN
THE NATIONAL MUSIC CONSERVATORY/NOOR AL HUSSEIN FOUNDATION
AND
THE EMBASSY OF ITALY
PRESENT IN CONCERT

KATIA RICCIARELLI, SOPRANO
ACCOMPANIED BY
VINCENTO SCALERA, PIANIST
IN THE PROGRAMME PIECES BY VIVALDI, HANDEL, ROSSINI AND OTHERS.
TUESDAY, 29 MARCH 1994 - 8.00 P.M.
PHILADELPHIA HOTEL - PHILADELPHIA BALLROOM

PHILADELPHIA HOTEL: TEL. 647100, MARSA: TEL. 61122, KOSHER RESTAURANT: TEL. 64427
THE NATIONAL MUSIC CONSERVATORY: TEL. 687450, CENTRO LINGUISTICO ITALIANO: TEL. 688348
MRS. RICCIARELLI AND MRS. SCALERA WILL DONATE THE PROCEEDS OF THE RECITAL TO THE NATIONAL MUSIC CONSERVATORY

ROYAL JORDANIAN

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

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No peace with armed settlers

DAILY REVELATIONS made by Israeli generals, soldiers and settlers at the judicial inquiry being held in Jerusalem are shocking. First, there were the standing orders that soldiers should not shoot at settlers who are seen shooting at Arabs. Then, there are the Israeli settlers armed with machineguns and loads of bullets who roam the streets of Hebron and other West Bank cities and go into mosques. Then, there are rabbis in Hebron who sanction Jews' killing of Arabs. Then we learn that the soldiers who were supposed to be guarding the Ibrahim Mosque were asleep at the crucial hours of dawn when Muslims and Jews came to the prayers, when awoken up by Baruch Goldstein's fire, those soldiers start shooting at Palestinians trying to flee the mosque. And then we hear of Hebronites testifying that they heard the sound of shooting coming from two sources in the mosque. Earlier Palestinian overseers of the mosque had said that they had written to Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, complaining of Goldstein's behaviour and warning against the possibility that he might commit a mad act.

We would have thought that given the volatile situation in the West Bank and Gaza and the hatred between Arabs and settlers, the fact that Jewish settlers were overarmed and that after the Oslo accords there was the possibility of Jewish radicals attempting to sabotage the deal, the Israeli authorities would have taken the necessary precautions to avert such an atrocity like the Hebron massacre. Were the Israelis more concerned with fighting stone-throwing Palestinian children than keeping an eye on the likes of Goldstein? Or is it because the Labour government of Mr. Rabin, fearful of a political fallout from confronting the settlers, that it chose to do nothing and still refuses to contemplate moving the settlers out of Hebron?

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership might have bungled its treatment of the issue. We are not sure that Security Council Resolution 904 will provide much protection for the Palestinians.

A couple of hundred unarmed U.N. observers will most certainly be only that, observers. The only protection the Palestinians will feel safe with is the removal of Israeli settlers and settlements and a quick implementation of the Oslo accords including the transfer of authority to the Palestinians themselves.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Wednesday criticised U.S.-sponsored moves to place U.N. peace observers inside the autonomy rule region — Gaza and Jericho — and not inside the rest of the occupied Palestinian lands. Tareq Masarweh said that there is no point in stationing U.N. peacekeepers in areas where the Israeli troops plan to withdraw except because these are needed to protect the Palestinians from their kinsmen. He said that this diabolical plan is being perpetrated and implemented through the Zionist Dennis Ross in collusion with the Israeli authorities in order to ensure perpetual occupation of the rest of the Palestinian land. The writer drew a contrast in this respect with the situation in South Lebanon where the Lebanese forces in the pay of Israel are guarding the buffer zone and controlling the affairs of the Lebanese people and at the same time protecting Israel from resistance attacks. It is because the United States does not want the rest of the Palestinian lands to return to the Palestinians that it has now adopted a new policy which does not recognise Arab Jerusalem as occupied Arab territory. He asked what the United States would call the Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war, adding that there is no point in carrying on with the current negotiations that are bound to end in failure and achieve nothing.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour voiced appreciation of France and the French leaders for adopting a stand at the U.N. Security Council different from those of other nations concerning the situation in the occupied Palestinian land. Referring to the recent interview given to the paper by the new French ambassador here, Saleh Al Oullab said that the ambassador's views prove the fact that France does not blindly follow in the footsteps of other nations but rather acts in line with its national interests based on mutual relations and the long historical links with the Arab World. The writer said the Palestinians and the Arabs in general hope that the western world can help them arrive at justice in the Palestine question out of a conviction that the Palestinians are an occupied nation under repression. Despite the U.S. reservation and its abstention from voting at the U.N. Security Council, the council's resolution, in which France had played a key role, reasserts the fact that Jerusalem is an occupied city, like the other parts of Palestine. Unlike France, said the writer, the United States had proved it is against justice and against human values.

Teaching as a participatory process with teacher as coach

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdounbeh

The role of the teacher, be it at the school or university level, is a particularly sensitive one. There are so many considerations, variables, challenges, paradoxes, and at times even contradictions to deal with. One important paradox good teachers have to come to grips with, in their formal relation to the students, is to be simultaneously involved enough to help and detached enough so as not to dominate. Due to its inherent doubleness, such a delicate task is not always easy to implement properly. What complicates the issue further in the specific case of our society is the ambiguity about the teacher's precise role.

In our society, many planners, educators, academic administrators, teachers and students hold extremely conventional views regarding the teacher's role or function. Most believe his main job (some in fact think it his sole job) is to simplify and explain the material to the students. The teacher, the argument goes, not only knows more than the students do (with respect to the syllabus) but is also especially qualified to communicate such knowledge clearly and lucidly.

Undeniably, there is a great deal of truth in such a conception. For one thing, the teacher must indeed know both more and how. It would be a disaster if a teacher of physics either knows less physics than his students or knows more but cannot convey the material in a simplified, understandable manner. After all, the teacher, like other specialists in the various walks of life, is a specialist in his/her own field. For another, knowledge or information is at the heart of the teaching/learning experience. The Webster's New World Dictionary is still correct: to teach is, among other things, "to provide with knowledge, insight, etc.; cause to know, to understand, etc." Students in any discipline, field or specialty join schools or institutions essentially for knowledge or information. Yes, an excellent teacher is the one who has the ability to "provide" them with such knowledge or information.

However, there are at least two objections to this view of the learning/teaching process. First, a teacher is not to spoon-feed. The problem with most traditional theories of education, which are unfortunately still prevalent (even

popular) at many of our educational establishments, is that they emphasise the role of the teacher in the said process at the expense of that of the student. The former is seen as an active (all-active) giver, the latter as a passive recipient. Clearly, there is danger here. If we give the students the impression (and our society often does) that the material they study can be explained best and understood best only through the teacher, then we are telling them indirectly that they cannot understand it on their own. Instilling such an attitude problem in this particular respect, not to mention our teachers of course) is harmful, for we reduce and underestimate both the ability and integrity of the students, encouraging them to be lazy, reticent or completely dependent on the teacher. This is what actually happens at most of our schools and universities: the teacher speaks; the student listens; the teacher reads out, the student copies; the teacher explains, the student memorises. There is a great deal of imbalance, the scales tipping heavily on the side of the teacher, and there is very little interaction. Most classes and lectures are dominated by the teacher. This is unacceptable.

The teaching/learning process ought to be a participatory experience to which the student and the teacher contribute almost equally. We need to create and foster in our students the conviction that they can read the material (any material) on their own and understand it well, that they ought to feel free to think about what they read, to question it, to form an opinion of it and to express themselves confidently. We need to train them to be independent, to wean them from the teacher, to make them aware of and value the ideal of self-learning and self-teaching. Most of the learning and teaching should be done at home, by the students themselves and with very little help from others; the purpose of the lesson or lecture time (in a healthy situation) is to go over the students' questions, queries, comments, assessments and overall opinions of the material. There ought to be real communication, and communication is a two-way street. This way the classes will be more enjoyable and more beneficial.

Second, the spread of knowledge is only part of the responsibility of the teacher. A long time ago (not so long in our part of the world), when there was little technology and

few libraries and books, it was a must for a person to know and to even memorise. It was as much a must for the teacher as for the student. The exemplary teacher was the one who knew the rules of grammar, but also the Koran and most of the Arabic of poetry. The reason, among other things, was that the teacher, because of the scarcity of texts and references and almost the total absence of the idea of the school library, had to recite the text orally — in other words, he had to be the text. And it was his job, of course, to convey whatever he had in his head to his students. Most of his teaching was communication of information, no more no less. All the student had to do (or almost all) was to learn by heart. (Unfortunately, the same is still happening at our public schools, especially in the so-called literary stream).

Today, the situation is remarkably different (at least, it ought to be). There are books and libraries everywhere, and there are (of course) computers. We do not need to cram information into the heads of our students; we do not need to make them encyclopaedias. The student how to deal with the valuable class time to teach the student how to store and memorise information he reads or sees, not how to store and memorise it. A very noble objective of teaching often gets ignored, and even entirely neglected, at our schools and universities, namely, intellectual development. The best favour a teacher can do to our students is to help develop and sharpen their minds, to make them think rationally, intelligently and sharply. Ultimately, our students need skills from our educational institutions — physical skills, vocational skills, and of course mental and intellectual skills — not just information.

In my opinion, a good teacher is not a preacher. He is more like a coach or a trainer. His job is to supervise and oversee. The coach ought by no means to take the place of the players and turn the players into spectators, as some coaches and teachers in our part of the world do. No, he is to let them warm up, train, exercise and play. He is, generally, close by watching and occasionally giving instructions. He knows when to step in and when to step out.

This war all but over, seeds of next one sown

By Mark J. Porubcansky
The Associated Press

BELGRADE — War in the Balkans is like a voracious weed that quickly strangles all normal life. It flowers, spreads its seed and dies.

After nearly three years, the wars of secession in former Yugoslavia may be nearly over. But the seeds of new conflicts, untenable political arrangements that obscure contradictory ethnic goals — have been sown.

Although the weeds may stay hidden for a while, as they did through four decades in the old Yugoslav federation, they are sure to sprout.

But even temporary peace is welcome in a land with 200,000 people dead or missing since 1991.

In a paradox typical of the Balkans, a horrible blast in a Sarajevo marketplace Feb. 5 that killed 68 was the catalyst to end the fighting.

Since then, the United States and Russia have pushed negotiations and events have rushed forward. Western allies forced Bosnian Serbs to remove their guns from around Sarajevo and the United States brought Bosnian Muslims and Croats back together.

Russia is winning Serb cooperation and pressing for a deal on the key Yugoslav conflict, between Serbs and Croats.

The marketplace massacre appears to have created a delicate mixture of revulsion, war weariness and credible threat of force from outside that could end the fighting.



Traffic lights and streetcars are once more working in Sarajevo, and almost two years of siege may soon be over.

But nothing now on the bargaining table will resolve the basic conflicts.

There are four interlocking issues: the nature of a Croat-Muslim federation; the relationship of Serbs to it and to Croatia; land and the capacity for explosions in adjacent

Kosovo, Macedonia, or Serbia itself.

Despite the good feelings engendered by the signing Friday in Washington of a Croat-Muslim deal, many difficulties remain. Those who fought and committed atrocities must forgive and forget. Borders of Croat and Muslim cantons must be drawn across mixed territory.

Everyone acknowledges Serbs must be part of any permanent solution. They

hold more than two-thirds of Bosnia and one-third of Croatia, and their desire for a greater Serbia has been a driving force of the war.

The question of territory, which doomed previous Bosnian peace talks, remains unresolved. A senior U.S. official said Muslims and Croats must have at least 51 per cent of Bosnia, while Bosnian Serbs say 45 per cent is the limit.

Territorial issues cannot be

settled without creating a class of permanently displaced, resentful people.

Political issues are even trickier. Serbs are willing to talk about connections with the Bosnian-Croat federation, and with Croatia itself. Russian envoy Vitaly Churkin stressed that solving the thorny status of Serbs in Croatia is the key.

The current momentum indicates the sides probably can find a way to paper over their

differences, even though, as Mr. Churkin said, "they're so used to war that the final step is psychologically difficult for them."

Still, their goals remain contradictory. Serbs minimally need continued ties to Serbs in Croatia, and propose to secure them through an association with Croatia itself.

That would reconstruct a form of prewar Yugoslavia, the ultimate political humiliation for Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, who fought the war and staked his place in history on establishing independence.

History is repeating itself. The old Yugoslavia was an effort to solve the same problems after a brutal civil conflict within World War II. The new political structures will be weaker than the earlier ones, which could not check nationalist ambitions and historic suspicions that destroyed the old federation. Peace will be in constant peril.

Since 1991, war has spread from northwest to southeast through Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia. Plenty of nationalist passion remains in Kosovo, where Serbs suppress an ethnic Albanian majority; in Macedonia, a traditional Balkan flashpoint; and in weakened Serbia.

When pictures of Balkan horror fade from television, will world policy-makers also stop paying attention and fumble the opportunities peace provides?

And if it took only a few years to destroy the old federation, how long can the new peace last?

Successful economic reform comes with consolidation of democracy

By Mohammad Kayed Abdel Haq

Economic reform and privatisation have been global watchwords for the last decade, and concerted efforts at promoting and implementing privatisation are bound to continue to occupy centre stage in the economies of developing countries. It has been seen that in the short-term economic liberalisation widens the gap between rich and poor, both structurally and regionally. Whereas in developed countries the state may be strong enough to withstand the social pressures which ensue from economic liberalisation and may retain a panoply of instruments which enable it to continue shaping social interactions, the state in underdeveloped countries, often has neither the inherent strength nor the needed instruments.

The question to be addressed is whether any reform strategy in new democracies will lead to resumed growth and will strengthen democracy. According to some arguments, the capacity of new democracies to undertake stabilisation programmes and to implement structural reform is hampered by the vast expectations of economic improvement they generate and by their vulnerability to popular pressure and to interest-group influence.

The ultimate economic criterion for evaluating the success of reforms can only be if a

country resumed growth at stable and moderate levels of inflation. The second criterion of successful reforms must be the consolidation of democracy. All groups must channel their demands through the democratic institutions and abjure other tactics, regardless of how pressing their needs may be. Going back to the first criterion, the moderate level of

"The question to be addressed is whether any reform strategy in new democracies will lead to resumed growth and will strengthen democracy. According to some arguments, the capacity of new democracies to undertake stabilisation programmes and to implement structural reform is hampered by the vast expectations of economic improvement they generate and by their vulnerability to popular pressure and to interest-group influence."

inflation requires determined disciplines in money supply and the budget deficit. The other requirement for market reform is to reduce the state apparatus, which means to reduce its size and the intensity of its intervention. The basic tools are privatisation, trade liberalisation and deregulation. Privatisation is necessary not only because state-owned

enterprise grows too much and proves to be vulnerable to internal techno-bureaucratic interest and not only because it does not respond fast enough to market stimuli, but also because its sale may help to solve the public debt problem.

The major coordinating role will be performed by the market, but the state will play its part. Public savings will be

political maxim, the state has to be transformed until it becomes as small as possible and as large as necessary.

An essential reform is to define a new pattern of state intervention. The old pattern was based on trade protection and direct investment. Priorities in state expenditure should be changed to eliminate subsidies and to develop the role of facilitator. This means, according to Bruce Robinson, Director of Aitken Hume Bank, London, to support the private sector to develop the infrastructure in health care and education and provide resources for the poor or disadvantaged who cannot pay to have access to these facilities.

In my opinion the strategy that will lead to resumed growth under democratic conditions is as follows:

a) Political conditions for the continuation of reforms become eroded without a social policy that protects at least those whose subsistence is threatened by the reforms.

b) If market reform is to be processed through the democratic institutions, the representative institutions must play a real role in shaping and implementing the reform policies.

Dr. Mohammad Kayed Abdel Haq is a London-based banker. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

The wonders of quality tourism

To the Editor:

I felt very sad when I read in a leading British newspaper, The Independent, an article on Petra and the problems encountered there, March 5. To read that this particular tourist "had been swindled, dehydrated, burnt and subjected to the Bedouin experience", in a major article from a newspaper that is widely read, is a minus for the tourism industry in Jordan.

I would like to quote Gerald Durrell, a world famous conservationist, on his views on tourism. He calls tourism "a curious modern disease. It attacks the shoeless man, the man of meagre wealth and the bloated man of affluence, whereupon it becomes an epidemic like the Black Death that stalked through Europe in the Middle Ages. It now ranges all over the world... I do say that while the clock is ticking, use time wisely and do not squander what you have for greed. Guard and respect the beauty you have been given — future generations will want to share it."

If we can keep Jordan, as far as possible, as it was, we will attract the right kind of tourists, the ones with money, the ones who want tranquility, beauty and unspoiled countryside and dealers, will pay for it. Nature, once destroyed, can never be recreated. Petra is one of the wonders of the world, surely it is not beyond us to keep it as a wonder. We have been blessed with a magnificent Kingdom of Jordan. Let us not sink under a sea of concrete and tourism greed.

Patricia Salti,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are return of unused manuscripts.

Fawanees — Pioneers in Jordanian theatre

By Mohammad Mashariqa

For more than 20 years, the Jordanian Fawanees Theatre Group has been attempting to put through to the public its highly controversial "message" and assert its presence in the theatre world.

Strict government censorship, in force before the democratic freedoms, has banned much of the group's theatre work with or without any justification.

The group's plays starting with the 1983 "Tut, Tat, Teet" have been facing wide scale criticism from the leftists and the conservatives and also from playwrights and traditional critics because of the Fawanees Theatre Group's departure from prevailing theatre norms in Jordan.

Indeed, some Jordanian playwrights tend to attribute to the Fawanees Theatre Group the various stages of development in the Jordanian theatre, culminating in the creative work of the modern theatre which tackles social and political issues.

Right from the start, the Fawanees Group has no doubt steered its potential and skill towards handling issues pertaining to the local community and has been acting in line with humanitarian values expressed in artistic performances. It has also elaborated its acting capabilities through a continued and endless process of learning from experiment and experience.

Nader Imran, the group's theatre director said: "We have never confined our work to a particular form of theatre work but were open for all Arab and international experiments, accepting new ideas all the time, to improve our performance."

Imran is one of the founders of the group which once included such notable artists like Khaled Tarif, Amer Madi and Ali Abu Khadrah.

We have never practised an imposed authority over any one, as we refuse to be treated in such manner. Nor have we committed ourselves to a particular ideological trend, but we rather kept our distance from all other groups," added Imran.

"Perhaps it was this policy that projected the

Fawanees Theatre Group as a 'distinguished artistic phenomenon' that has survived all these years, despite the departure of some of its founding members," he pointed out.

Imran said one can safely say that most of the cadres of Jordanian artists, theatre, actors and musicians had started their work with the Fawanees Theatre Group.

Perhaps the group's significant character is attributed to the fact that their performances are something of an integrated audio visual programme which employs live music to accompany the acting on the stage. Indeed, music has been an integral and essential element of the group's performances that are enriched also by the light and sound effects, bright costumes and decor.

The most striking example of this kind of theatre work was the play "Gilgamesh" in 1992 and Tibeh Ascending To Heaven of 1993, both of which were presented at the Moroccan Theatre Festival.

AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

In the two plays Nader Imran levels open criticism on the characters of the dictator and the religious person who thrive on the backwardness of their city state.

Despite their success, these plays have been criticised as being instances of symbolism and alienation. But the group's plays are always watched by an audience of intellectuals and artists keen on following the Fawanees Theatre's development with a measure of respect and appreciation.

This year, the Fawanees Theatre Group embarked on a pioneering project — the First Amman Theatre Festival. It is in observance of the World Theatre Festival which starts on March 23 and ends on March 30. It will be held at the Royal Cultural Centre and the group hopes that the festival will become an annual event in the Kingdom.

Imran described the idea as an old one noting that the past circumstances have prevented its execution. "We have always aspired to participate in an International Theatre Festival that allows exchange of expertise and

serves as an arena for improvement and development."

"It seems that the climate in the Kingdom now allows putting this idea into practice," he added. "This year, the festival is confined to a number of local groups who work in cooperation with the Fawanees Theatre Group and supports its concepts of theatre work," he pointed out.

"Financial constraints have prevented us from inviting other Arab or international theatre groups to perform in our festival this month and we had hoped that the Ministry of Culture and the Greater Amman Municipality would help us execute this artistic and cultural event which would no doubt earn Jordan a prominent position in the world of culture," Imran said.

The festival comprises four performances and a specialised seminar during which Imran will present his own production of play entitled A Very Symbolic Play, Very Symbolic. Acting in the play are Muhtaseb Aref, Suheir Fahd and Zein Ghanma.

The second play Kawalees was produced by Nader Imran who acts on stage with Muhtaseb Aref while in the third play, Summer Night Dream, actors group the female students of the Al Ahlieh Private School in Amman.

The main play by Nader Imran embodies the Fawanees Theatre Group's philosophy. It depicts the character of a dictator who represses his own people.

This is indeed a sarcastic play reflecting the situation in the Arab World whose leaders are mainly responsible for their nation's recurrent defeats and setbacks, but who tend to blame the people for the debacle.

In one scene of the play Suheir Fahd shouts at the defeated dictator, saying: "How can we achieve victory while everything is taboo in the country. Everything is taboo, even love, music and dancing. How can we think for ourselves at a time when our minds are prisoners of superstition."

This symbolic play clearly depicts a rise against repression and dictatorship. Perhaps this time Imran is presenting a work of art reflecting the real life. Perhaps his play comes as a reply to the accusations levelled to the group over the past years.

BOOK REVIEW

Whither the region's economies?

Economic and Political Liberalism in the Middle East

Edited by Tim Niblock and Emma Murphy
British Academic Press, London 1993, £35

The Politics Of Economic Reform In The Middle East

Edited by Henri Barkey
Macmillan, London 1993, £37.95

These two collections of essays have similar aims and cover much of the same ground. Both are of a high standard, useful and thought-provoking. If they are subtly different in some of their assumptions and approach it can probably be attributed to the fact that the first comes from the new Research Unit for the International Study of Economic Liberalisation and its Social and Political Effects" at the University of Exeter, while the other is decidedly East Coast United States with strong links to the World Bank-IMF.

What the two have decisively in common is that "economic liberalisation," defined by Niblock and Murphy as "any measure which strengthens the role of the market in the economy," cannot be divorced from social and political change. They also agree that economic liberalisation is inevitable in the Middle East because state socialist experiments in the region failed. Barkey believes this was partly because "sheltered for many years by either the winds of the Cold War or the flow of petrodollars into the region, they allowed their economic structures to atrophy". This ignores the question whether these statist systems were appropriate in that particular political/historical period. Nasser's Egypt, for example, had some real achievements in the High Dam and the management of the Suez Canal, which could hardly have been left to the private sector, and this was before the advent of petrodollars. Yet undoubtedly an impasse was reached in most countries which pursued this route. Algeria provides the most disastrous example — even with oil. Change became inevitable and with a patent failure of "marxist" policies, the change was in a liberal direction.

However, all the writers here agree in their different ways that there are a host of reasons why measures of economic and political liberalisation may conflict and even cancel each other out. Without patience, care and cautious planning they may well lead to inflation for basic necessities, a sharp rise in the gap between rich and poor, leading to a clamp-down by the state and an actual reversal of the trend towards political liberalisation. Conversely, a rush towards parliamentary democracy may lead to protectionist policies rather than the reverse. As Pinochet showed in Chile, a politically incorrect dictator may be the best person to apply economically correct policies from Washington's viewpoint.

No wonder Patrick Clawson, in his excellent conclusion to the Barkey book What's So Good About Stability? says that even World Bank economists find that the evidence of the benefit of their orthodox medicine — realistic exchange and interest rates, low inflation and sustainable budget deficits — is decidedly mixed.

Between them these two books cover all the countries of the Middle East (including Israel, Turkey and Iran), except Lebanon and the richer oil states where economic liberalisation is hardly an issue. The kind of problems they discuss are relevant to all the developing countries — not least those of the post-Communist world. Even Israel's experience provides lessons despite its "most favoured nation" status in relation to the development world.

It would be too much to expect these books to tackle the problems which liberal capitalism is only just facing up to — the environment, depletion of resources, the dangers of urbanisation and Patrick Clawson's blithe assumption that an increase in per capita income proves an economic policy an unqualified success per se.

In her leading contribution to the Exeter book, Edith Penrose characteristically broadens the horizon to point out that although "Western thinkers tend to view liberalism as essentially of European origin... a great deal of what is called liberal thought appeared much earlier in the Middle East". In fact as early as 2,500 B.C. in the great Middle Eastern cities "powerful and wealthy mercantile trading classes could force the bureaucracies of palace and temple to accept what in many respects we now call liberal measures."

Maxime Rodinson has shown how there was nothing intrinsic to Islam, which made it antipathetic to capitalism. There are various historical reasons why it was the West which made a success of capitalism in its industrialising phase and came to dominate the world. Now the Pacific Rim is catching up. The Middle East has been lagging behind but, as complacency about the future of liberal capitalism is on the wane, it may well be that the countries of the Middle East once again have a unique contribution to make to the social and political welfare of the world — Middle East International.

Peter Mansfield

Thoughts for this week

Believe those who are seeking the truth, doubt those who find it — Andre Gide, French author and critic (1869-1951).

Sceptics laugh in order not to weep — Anatole France, French author, critic and poet (1844-1924).

I don't know anything about luck. I've never banked on it, and I'm afraid of people who do. Luck to me is something else: hard work, and realising what is opportunity and what isn't — Lucille Ball, American actress-comedian (1911-1989).

Efforts to move Lenin a 'forgotten problem'

By Dave Carpenter
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Vladimir Lenin truly may rest in peace these days. Doves of tourists no longer haunt his tomb, and it appears authorities are in no hurry to move him from Red Square.

Months after it began, the emotional campaign to bury the father of the Soviet state has dissolved into a "forgotten problem" for Boris Yeltsin's government and many Russians.

With the economy in

ruin, ultranationalism on the rise and hardliners clamouring to revert to the Soviet Union, the government has enough to worry about.

"The problem seems to be forgotten. Nobody's thinking about it anymore," Anatoly Krasikov, a spokesman for Mr. Yeltsin, told the Associated Press Wednesday.

"Naturally, the problem exists. But this is not a problem of national importance," he said. "And it's our duty not to let it turn into a political problem."

If the government does try to move Lenin's remains from his granite and marble mausoleum to his family's burial plot in St. Petersburg, as some officials have urged, an uproar is inevitable among people such as Yevgeny Chestyakov.

Mr. Chestyakov, a pensioner who has visited Lenin's tomb more times than he can remember, paid his respects inside the squat red building again Wednesday on a gray, snowy day.

Then he shared an opinion held by millions of countrymen: "Let him lie here."

"This is history," said the retired construction worker, 64. "Why should anyone touch history? Nothing would change if they took him to Leningrad" — the Communist-era name for St. Petersburg.

Lenin, he said, was "a good organiser whose teachings went wrong. I think he wanted people to live a better life."

Such persevering reverence for a man who founded a totalitarian state is what Mr. Yeltsin wanted to quash in October when, flush from success in a

showdown with hardliners, he ordered the goose-stepping ceremonial guard removed from in front of the mausoleum.

The government also announced it would oust the Lenin Museum from its red brick building nearby to make room for the new city council.

Not long afterward, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov proposed that Lenin, Josef Stalin and dozens of other Communist luminaries be removed from their supposedly final resting places at the Kremlin walls. And

the Russian Orthodox Church chimed in, saying a proper burial of Lenin would not tarnish his memory.

Momentum for Lenin's removal appeared unstoppable, and thousands of people rushed to the mausoleum amid the speculation.

The success of hardliners in December parliamentary elections has stopped the momentum cold. Mr. Yeltsin's office professes to be putting the issue on a back burner, and Mr. Luzhkov isn't pressing it.

Mexicans are losing the battle of the bulge

By Christine Tierney
Reuters

MEXICO CITY — Mexicans are losing the battle of the bulge and it's no wonder — an average meal of tacos with a beer has more calories than two McDonald's Big Mac hamburgers and a large coke.

"I can't think of anything in the traditional Mexican cuisine that isn't fattening," said Dr. Aquiles Ayala, a physician and nutritionist in Mexico City.

"The essence of Mexican cuisine — bread, rice, beans and tortillas — is already loaded with carbohydrates. And now there's lots of fattening junk food, potato chips, tostadas, doughnuts and pork rind snacks," Dr. Ayala said.

Between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of adult Mexicans are overweight, esti-

mates Enrique Caballero, a doctor at the National Medical Centre in Mexico City who specialises in glandular disorders.

"Most people in Mexico consume more calories than they need," he says. Even worse, many of them are empty calories.

Mexicans, for instance, drink more coca-cola drinks, on a per capita basis, than Americans or anyone else in the world, according to the company's own figures.

Poor Mexicans, accustomed to believing that a little cushion of fat protects against illness, pile on calories in the form of heavy starches and carbohydrates but still suffer worrisome protein deficiencies, Dr. Caballero says.

Better-off Mexicans have the money to buy meat and the domestic help to pre-

pare salads — a time-consuming chore in Mexico where every leaf needs to be disinfected — but they indulge in too many fatty foods, sauces and cheese, he says.

The trend in Europe and the United States towards healthier foods has been slow in coming to Mexico. "It's easy to find taquerias (taco restaurants), but to find restaurants that serve nutritious food here is difficult," Dr. Caballero says.

An average serving of five tacos — corn or flour tortillas typically stuffed with minced meat and peppers and melted cheese — and a beer comes to about 1,500 calories, according to Dr. Ayala.

That's the equivalent of two Big Macs — the most fattening item on McDonald's menu at 560 calories each — a large coke and a

regular cheeseburger.

To give an idea of what 1,500 calories represents, it's about as many calories as a medium-sized woman needs to get through an entire day.

"We don't have very much information about obesity and calorie consumption for many countries in Latin America, but yes, we know that obesity is rising throughout Latin America," said Dr. Cecilio Moron of the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) regional office in Santiago, Chile.

Sketchy data compiled by the FAO show Mexican women have a 36 per cent obesity rate. In the most closely comparable U.S. studies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that 34 per cent of American women are overweight or obese, while 58

per cent of Hispanic-American women are overweight or obese.

FAO studies on obesity put Mexico somewhere in the middle of the spectrum for Latin America, with the highest levels of obesity in the region registered in Uruguay and Chile.

Above the heavy traffic of Mexico City's Reforma Boulevard, the statues of three Aztec emperors suggest that excess weight was not always a problem in Mexico.

Aztecs and other indigenous groups in pre-Columbian Mexico had an excellent diet. Rich in fibre and protein and high in calcium without being high in fat, said Hector Burges at the National Institute of Nutrition of Mexico City.

Fatty meats, lard and dairy products were introduced to the Mexican diet

in the 16th-century by Spanish colonisers who brought cows and pigs to the area known as Mesoamerica for the first time.

Although excess weight can bring on diabetes, heart and other ailments, dieting in Mexico also entails risks.

Some of the lowest-calorie foods, vegetables, fruits, fish and water are more likely to carry bacteria or pesticide residue than cooked foods and bottled soft drinks.

Additionally, some of the diet aids available in Mexican pharmacies can be dangerous. Diuretics, amphetamine-based diet pills and hormones to speed up the thyroid gland can have harmful side-effects ranging from the depletion of essential minerals to damage to the nervous system, Dr. Caballero says.

By Caroline Brothers
Reuters

ABINGDON, Southern England — All is not well among the rolling green hills of the Vale of White Horse.

Residents are angry. Neighbours refuse to speak. And the district council in this picturesque corner of Oxfordshire is besieged with letters and irate calls.

Rural racket is getting to the region's 116,500 inhabitants and many of them won't rest until it stops.

Hours of local authority time have been taken up with complaints about the whirr of farm machinery, the shot-gun boom of mechanised bird-scaring devices and the banging of target practice by clay pigeon shooting clubs.

Rowdy English countryside drives newcomers to distraction

The "dawn chorus" of thrushes, robins and finches, and the cawing of rooks in rookeries, have driven other residents to distraction. Court cases have been waged over the crowing of cockerels and the barking of champion dogs in nearby kennels.

Many complaints come from newcomers to the Vale who fail to realise one essential fact — the peace of the English countryside is a myth.

"People sometimes have an unreasonable sense of peace and quiet," said Robert Haddrell, assistant

head of environmental protection at the Vale of White Horse District Council.

"They have the aspiration to live in a village. But when they get there they find farmers out with their tractors at six a.m., bird scarers going off and people out clay pigeon shooting. It's not what they expect," he said. "The countryside is very noisy."

Less than an hour by train from London, the Vale is bordered by the River Thames in the north and rolling hills to the south. St George is supposed to have slain the

legendary dragon on a local hill and a 365-foot (111-metre) figure of a white horse carved from a hillside is thought to date from the Iron Age.

The area has recently seen growing numbers of city workers moving in, commuting daily to London. Almost half the houses have been built since the 1960s, and changing lifestyles and expectations have brought the council big headaches.

"The 'neighbourhood complaint' has increased enormously — we're talking about 280 per cent over 10

years," said Alistair Greatbanks, head of environmental protection, who leads a team of expert investigators.

"We get a lot of complaints about noise, more than about any other problem," he said, adding that his department dealt with 253 such complaints in 1992-93 alone. "People's tolerance has certainly gone down."

Noise problems range from the unbearable to the batty, but all have to be checked out to stop locals coming to blows.

Members of Mr. Great-

banks' 10-strong team have heard just about everything, from concerns about ducks quacking too loudly on the village pond, to protests about the volume of rave parties whose thudding music carries for miles.

They intervened after a man shot his neighbour's cat for getting into his pheasant run. The neighbour lodged a complaint about the noise of the birds in an attempt at revenge.

They were called in when another man reported an elderly lady playing death marches on the piano at three in the morning. She counter-attacked, killing his canaries with pesticides.

Most recently, a woman wrote to protest about the peal of bells at her village church.

Too much make up

By Jean-Claude Elias

The new programmes for personal computers (PC) are very good looking. Beautifully designed displays, fancy colours (fuchsia is definitely IN), elegant drawings and well laid menu commands all contribute to creating an extremely pleasant, attractive and comfortable working environment. With the high resolution of Super VGA monitors (screens) and the possibility the new systems have to display more than 16 million colours, you almost expect Claudia Schiffer to jump out of her photograph on the screen.

This being said, and while it is perfectly normal for a programme designed for art drawing to look as good as it can be, one would wonder why would the displays of a stock control or accounting software for instance have to resemble a Rembrandt painting.

Each manufactured product normally receives a certain dose of what we would call make up. This dose is carefully studied by considering the environment, the conditions the product will be used in and by weighing the amount of human interfacing with it. You rarely look at the spark plugs in your car. Their external appearance is therefore less important to you than the dash board you contemplate every day.

On the other hand, items that you constantly see must be simple enough in design not to become "painful" to look at. A multi-coloured pen, studded with glittering diamonds would not make the ideal writing tool for everyday's office work.

There is however a lot of make up abuse in the external appearance of some PC software. More particularly in computer games. The drawings, the graphics are so eye-catching that you tend to forget what the game was originally designed for. And maybe this is

chip talk



what the designers want! To hide the weaknesses of the game itself.

There are tens of computer versions of the popular chess game. Since chess is one unique, well known, well defined game, how did game programmers come up with so many different ones? Thanks to graphics, of course. They bet on the user's thirst for flashing colours and Las Vegas-styled graphics.

Exaggerating make up is one means software designers have to compete with each other. Attractive at first, their designs quickly become ugly and boring for the computer's operator who prefers to switch to programmes with simpler layouts.

Car manufacturers fought for decades to give drivers reliable, safe machines. Now that most cars are very reliable and comply to strict safety regulations, car makers try to attract buyers by proposing more gadgets in the dash board, CD players, plenty of electronics and of course, fashionable body colours. Isn't all this far from the vehicle's original conception? Isn't it, again, make up? Isn't PC software going through a similar phase?

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

■ In one of the cities in Michigan, law allowed a person to sleep with pigs in one bed.

■ Actor Rudolph Valentino, reputed as the women's charmer, didn't marry except for only one day.

■ The whale can stay under water for three successive hours.

■ The Kenyan authorities imprisoned a male goat for two days because it was charged with robbing 105 shillings!

■ A Mexican used to go punctually to his office wearing only his "short" and "sandals" for 13 years.

■ It is possible for a fish to get seasick!

■ Indio, California, is called "the date capital of the United States".

LET'S LEARN ARABIC

- Give me a kiss. *Antini kobla.*
- He bought me a nice present. *Ishtara lee hadiya jumeca.*
- I'll give the matter thought. *Sawfa ofakkir fee hazihil mas'ala.*
- I mean it. *Kuni aksid zalik.*
- May I come in? *Momkin adkhul?*
- Are you kidding? *Hal anta tamrah?*
- You're a stubborn guy. *Anta shakhs aseed.*
- We're all mixed up. *Naknu mah'taroon jiddan.*
- It's a real pleasure to meet you, sir. *Innahs la-soroor azem ann okabilak, ya sayyedil.*
- Smile, and the world will smile with you. *Ibtasim, tabtasim laka domia.*
- Such is my luck! *Haza howa hazzil!*

YOUR MEDICAL GUIDE

LIPOMA

This is the name given to a fatty tumour. The body is normally covered by a layer of fat beneath the skin, and it sometimes happens that instead of being distributed evenly the fat in one place forms into a small tumour — or lump — about the size of an egg. This forms a soft, painless bump beneath the skin. The tumours are quite harmless, but sometimes look unsightly, in which case they can easily be removed by a small operation.

JOKES

■ A client got into a barber's shop to shave. The razor was blunt. Many red spots of blood scattered here and there on his ironed, clean shirt. The barber, however, took no care of the man's severe pains. The poor client began to shout for help. As the pain grew stronger and stronger, the "slaughtered-man" fell down from the chair till he was almost lying on the floor.

"What's the matter with you? Where are you going?" asked the barber in great astonishment.

"I'm kneeling to kiss your feet," answered the man.

■ FATHER: "What are you going to do when you grow up, Hassan?"

HASSAN: "I'm going to work at a confectionary, dad!"

YOUR DREAMS INTERPRETED

JOKE: The meaning of a joke dream depends on the action and reaction. If you heard a joke and were amused, it indicates a disagreement with a friend or an embarrassing social predicament in the offing; to dream of telling a successful joke is an omen of business success, but if it was a dud, it predicts a personal disappointment. Dirty jokes or offensive jokes forecast large profits!

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Who was known as the Lion of the North?
2. Which country is noted for bird's nest soup?
3. What animal builds a dray?
4. What is a cat-call?
5. What is a monkey puzzle?
6. Oliver Cromwell dissolved "The Rump" in 1653. What was "The Rump"?

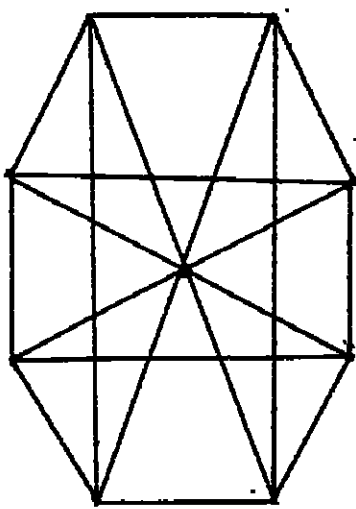
PUZZLES

(A) RIDDLE ME

- Why is the letter "F" good for planting seeds?
- What tree resembles the calendar?
- What can give you the power to see through the walls?
- Which is the richest country in the world?
- Why are dentists such sad men?

(B) ALL IN A LINE

Can you copy this diagram exactly without taking your pencil off the paper and without going over any line or part of a line more than once?



A farewell to Barbara

By E. Yaghi

Things do not change: We change — Henry David Thoreau

It was on a trip to America that I first espied her at Queen Alia Airport, while waiting for my flight to take off. She, tall, elegant and graceful, appeared to be like me, alone. I had studied her for quite some time to determine if a husband accompanied her and after assuring myself that she was flying solo, I next tried to determine if she were American or not. Since I didn't deem it really appropriate to stride up to her and ask, "are you American?" I prolonged my curiosity until the plane landed at Orly Airport in Paris.

I and the other passengers were ported by bus to the main terminal and there, a few people in front of me, bobbed the long flowing hair atop a head that reached above the crowd of anxious passengers. "She speaks French!" I told myself. This is wonderful if she's American, but terrible if she's French for that would mean that she had reached her destination. I had taken three years of French one hundred years ago in high school taught by a person who obviously had never gotten near a native French speaker and about the only thing I could muster in that Romantic language was, "Parlez vous Français?" Something I would never dare utter to anyone competent in French because my vocabulary didn't go beyond these three words.

I gathered my courage and decided to be bold and approach her. I had little to lose except a possible cold shoulder. I had enough to gain, a possible friendship for the trip overseas and someone to wade through the technicalities with French officials. I timidly tapped on her shoulder and said, "Excuse me, do you speak English?"

To my surprise and delight, she spun around and with a gracious smile replied, "Yes, I do."

Thus began my affair with the most wonderful woman I have ever met. We spent the remaining hours at the airport in Paris chatting and on board the flight, we sat next to each other in the middle of a row of four seats. Looking back now, I can imagine how we must have driven those around us crazy, for we didn't stop talking the entire flight except for meals and we even managed to talk then. I had searched everywhere for Barbara and at last I found her. She was too good to be true.

We discussed everything in those twelve hours, from international politics to cooking to our children. She was planning to attend her son's wedding. I, to attend my

son's second surgery for a collapsed lung. The first collapse had occurred six months previously and I had rushed to his aid to witness a very painful operation. Now, half a year later, the other side of his lung collapsed and I, the dutiful parent was off to try to ease his pain, although suffering is something a person bears alone, though some comfort may be gained from sympathetic expressions and soothing words.

At any rate, I had no complaints about the trip, the food, the accommodations or anything else, for I remained unaware and uncaring until the plane touched down on the runway at New York City. Yes, I was anxious to see my children who resided in upstate New York, but I hated to be separated from this remarkable woman who had shared the last 12 hours of my life. We parted promising to get in touch with each other upon our respective return to Jordan. Waiting at Kennedy Airport, were my daughter and her husband who gallantly whisked me away to my ailing son and his surgery leaving Barbara alone to make her connections to her own destination and children.

One successful surgery and two months later, we got in touch back in Jordan. When I heard her voice I said, "Barbara, is that you? We must get together soon!"

Thus ensued a wonderful relationship but as all good things must come to an end, so has Barbara's sojourn in Jordan. She soon will return to America where she and her doctor husband will retire. But, a part of Barbara will remain with me, for we absorb and become something of everything we meet.

She has always been there whenever I've needed her. She's also one of the few people that can see beauty in the plain and blessings in the common things that one might tend to take for granted. She's been my counterpart and complement that coincides with both the adopted Arab in me as well as the native American. She forges the past with the present, and spans the twain between East and West. She has given me more than she has received on my part and has forever had the patience to witness my sorrows and joys. She and her husband are my Mr. and Mrs. Gloom Buster who shall soon cease to spread happiness in this part of the world with their laser guns and magic wands that zap away black clouds and bring summer breezes of laughter and sunshine.

But, I cannot say to Barbara "Good-bye" for that is much too final. I can only whisper to the winds, "farewell my dearest friend. God willing, may we meet again. You are forever in my heart and always on my mind, and remember, to much of the world, you may be just Barbara, but to me, you are all the world."

A royal perspective on architecture

By Samer Ghaleb Bagasen

Last week saw the launch of a new architecture magazine in Britain. This magazine is funded with a £300,000 loan from the Institute of Architecture, a private school established by the Prince of Wales and of which he is president. The prince is on the cover of the first issue and he has contributed a 2,000 word article reiterating his familiar theme of public participation in the planning and building process. The prince has created for himself a platform for, directly or indirectly, spreading views about architecture, planning, the environment and local and national government. The primary failing of the prince's architectural interventions in the mid eighties, which culminated in his 1989 publication *A Vision of Britain*, has been the narrowness of their perspective. He began from the dim awareness that there were nice old buildings and nasty modern ones. He wrongly believed that there "was a unified, anti-historical style called modernism that aspired to trample arrogantly on the wishes of people and bury all the pretty villages and towns in concrete." But, insofar as the towns were buried in concrete, the guilty men, at least in Britain, were not architects. The best modern British architects have long shared Prince Charles' belief in the value of tradition, craftsmanship and responsibility towards the human and architectural context. It is those who commission them who have too often refused to pay for quality.

The prince's architectural starting point was that modern architecture was nasty without giving any clear indication of how it might be nice. His often voiced

dislike of most forms of modernism did wider damage by encouraging the proliferation of pointless and tasteless decoration that is about as far removed as can be imagined from the timeless principles, traditions and craftsmanship that he abhors.

The prince and his magazine campaign for democratic building. *Perspectives*, plans to be full of reviews of buildings by users and passers-by and will actively demand public participation in the planning process. The magazine's editor, in his first editorial, writes: "...*Perspectives* is committed to the evolution of a new architecture which combines temporary technology with the inspirational ideas offered by traditional buildings... The reconciliation of the old and the new, united with a concern for relating new buildings to their settings, will restore delight to our view of the world."

Likewise, in an article entitled *Power To The People*, also written for the launch issue, the prince writes: "It is a matter of combining an understanding of building traditions and history with the scope offered by new technologies to realise modern and very often demanding building designs." The prince's central point is correct: That architecture is different from other arts in that the public as well as the users have to live with the outcome. In helping to provide a new forum in which complex issues, such as public involvement in architecture and planning, can be discussed, the Prince of Wales is performing a precious service.

The writer teaches architecture at the University of Applied Sciences. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Saturday, March 26

8:30 Delta
Mom Comes To Town
Delta's mother is feeling lonely. She decides not only to visit Delta, but to live with her.

9:30 African Nations Cup match
Nigeria Vs. Gabon

10:15 News in English

10:30 Second half of the match

11:15 Feature Film — La Bamba

Sunday, March 27

8:30 You Bet Your Life
Our weekly date with comedian Bill Cosby, who gives away the grand prize of \$10,000 to the winning couple.

9:15 Recording of the Afri-

can Nations Cup match
Ghana Vs. Guinea

10:00 News in English

10:20 Island Son

Falling Stars

Dr. Daniel defends a colleague from an angry senator who has been wrongly diagnosed and Sam helps a patient get over amnesia.

11:30 Golden Palace

Monday, March 28

8:30 Step By Step

9:15 African Nations Cup match

Egypt Vs. Gabon

10:00 News in English

11:00 Feature Film — Short Circuit

An Indian engineer, living in the U.S., invents a unique robot that leads the police to criminals.

Tuesday, March 29

8:30 The Powers That Be

9:15 African Nations Cup match

Senegal Vs. Guinea

10:00 News in English

10:45 Cape Rebel

Slooth manages to reach the shore safely, but he soon discovers that he has been followed by the captain who accuses him of murder.

11:30 Delta

Wednesday, March 30

8:30 Too Close For Comfort

9:15 African Nations Cup match

Nigeria Vs. Egypt

10:00 News in English

10:45 Feature Film — Rock-

Starring: Burt Lancaster

Thursday, March 31

8:30 Flesh And Blood

9:15 African Nations Cup match

Ghana Vs. Senegal

10:00 News in English

10:45 Feature Film — Al-

ways Remember I Love You

Friday, April 1

8:30 Comedy

9:10 G.P.

Dr. Nicolai is invited to a friend's home. His friend later commits suicide.

10:00 News in English

10:15 Scene Of The Crime

We, The Enemy

During the German occupation of France, a French girl falls in love with a German spy.

Vietnamese learn America's anguish through works of art

By Peter Eng
The Associated Press

HANOI — Through works by American artists, some of them veterans trying to exorcise demons, Vietnamese are learning they were not the only ones who suffered from the grotesque aberration of war.

A young woman gasped aloud and covered her mouth with a hand upon seeing "war baby," a mangled black-red body in the hand of an anguished, imploring soldier. It was painted by a Vietnam War protester, Benny Andrews, who said the war "just bled into my work."

The painting is one of 82 works in the show, *As Seen By Both Sides: American*

And Vietnamese Artists Look At The War. The show opened on the faded ochre walls of Hanoi's National Fine Arts Museum in January after a widely attended three-year tour in the United States.

There are other reminders of the fighting in the 1960s and 1970s: The rubble of a U.S. bombing, the tail of a U.S. warplane protruding from a pond, an army museum, the air raid sirens that still daily sound at noon.

Still, clusters of people come to see the exhibit: Veterans of years in the battlefields, young couples who spent days of childhood in bomb shelters, kids who weren't born when the war ended. Each paid an

admission fee of about \$1, very expensive for most Vietnamese.

"Just as in the United States, we need a lot of education about them, the Vietnamese need to know more about us," said Curator C. David Thomas, a veteran and artist. "The show's really not about war. It's about humanity and the insanity of war, and the Vietnamese need to see that, too."

Almost all the Vietnamese work was done by veterans. But many of the paintings were done during the war to rally people to the cause, and they romanticise the conflict. They show sentimental landscapes, a woman soldier arranging flowers in a

trench, a soldier getting a haircut under the shade of bamboo trees.

The Vietnamese are the heroes. By contrast, the American works are explosions of blood and fire: A Napalmed Head with its searing, black screams; Peace, a bloody Christ-like figure hanging from the blades of a helicopter gunship.

The Vietnamese are the victims.

Through these works, ordinary Vietnamese for the first time have the chance to see the extent to which a war that their leaders had taught them to accept was so passionately and painfully repudiated by the other side.

One recent morning,

museum researcher Nguyen Binh Ninh, 38, who fled U.S. bombings in her youth, said she preferred War Baby to a Vietnamese painting displayed next to it. In bright colours, the latter shows a woman soldier holding up her child, happy in the glow of Vietnam's victory.

"A first look at that picture, and people think of war and death," she said of War Baby.

"I prefer that in order to remember the war, people should come to the exhibit to understand what Americans were thinking about the war. The Vietnamese thought the Americans were very cruel and the Americans had the same feeling about the Viet-

namese. They both never knew they were the tools of those in power."

One Vietnamese man wrote in the museum visitor's book: "The paintings clearly expressed the truth about the war. It made me hate the war and love peace."

"The wound is being healed, a new layer of skin," a second man wrote.

Thomas, director of the Indochina Arts Project and teacher at Boston's Emmanuel College, returned to Vietnam to open the show along with two other veterans-artists. They say it's helped their healing. They've communicated to a Vietnamese audience and made friends with artists and other former enemies.

Richard Olsen, art teacher at the University of Georgia at Athens, said he feels more at peace now that he's finally returned to Vietnam after 30 years, this time with art instead of a rifle.

When he finished his tour of duty in 1963, he painted scenes of the war to get it out of his system. One of his works on display shows a helicopter pilot taking three 50-calibre rounds through the stomach, "one of my friends got killed that way. I drew it with tears in my eyes," Olsen said.

But some Vietnamese didn't like to see such works.

Thomas said a Vietnamese army colonel told him he was happy that

Americans had the chance to see Vietnamese culture through the exhibit when it was in the United States.

"He was happy that America had something to show the Vietnamese as human beings," said Thomas.

The colonel, just like many other Vietnamese, felt sorrow over the war and believed it was important to remember because it is part of their history. Just the same, he told Thomas, the Vietnamese want to look to the future and not be mired in the past.

In response to such feelings, Thomas has put together an exhibit about Vietnamese culture — still life, portraits, landscapes — that will open next year in the United States.

Baseball brightens lives in Chicago housing project

By Andrew Stern
Reuters

CHICAGO — Young white urban professionals volunteer to coach a baseball team of bickering black kids from one of America's most violent public housing projects.

Coaches and players grudgingly learn to care about each other and the team wins the league championship.

Sound like a soft-hearted movie plot?

It may be. Paramount, the studio that bought the film rights to the book *Hardball: A Season In The Projects*, can be expected to mould the story to get the

maximum emotional payoff.

First-time author and third-year coach Dan Coyle, who wrote the objective yet touching account of a Little League team's precarious second season played in the shadows of the notorious Cabrini-Green Housing Estate, said the book has its own morality tale to tell.

"There are people who look at this book as a parable for urban volunteers," the bespectacled, 28-year-old Coyle, who grew up in Anchorage, Alaska, said in an interview.

"There are a lot of volunteers and altruists who go into a neighbourhood like Cabrini — whether it's in

Los Angeles, New York, Detroit or Denver — with ideas that because they volunteered to help out, therefore they have some sort of moral weight or force.

"This book is sort of a lesson. And I sorta hope it's true, that it's not so. You have to arrive at some middle somewhere," he said.

Coyle, said his book about the first Chicago near north Kikuyos (a combination of the team's corporate sponsor and an African tribal name) picks up where Alex Kotlowitz's 1991 best-seller *There Are No Children Here* left off.

Kotlowitz intimately described the lives of two young brothers growing up

amid the mayhem, drug-dealing and poverty of another housing estate in racially polarised Chicago.

"His book established better than any other what the situation is, what urban America is for kids growing up," Coyle said over a breakfast of granola and strawberries.

"We know what is. Now what are we going to do about it? This book is about what happens when someone tries," he said.

Coyle's book delves into some of the characters in this ghetto where gunfire is discussed like the weather and children scarred by violence act accordingly.

The slick boys, the street name for the police, are in a

running battle with an array of drug-dealing gang members and snipers who climb to the upper floors of dilapidated buildings to prey on rivals and innocents alike.

The young ballplayers — some of whom can identify the type and calibre of weapon by listening to the gunshot — have tumultuous practices reflective of this chaotic environment.

"What these kids do, with their mouths and their attitudes, is keep you from feeling like some kind of a saintly volunteer — and that's healthy," Coyle said.

Coyle knows he will have little control of how the movie turns out, so he picked the studio that seemed to best understand his book.

Looming over the story are Cabrini-Green's monolithic high-rises where murderous gangs, routine gunfire and dire poverty absorb the lives of 7,000 residents within sight of Chicago's richest lakeside neighbourhoods.

Coyle spent hours with the children gazing out at the city from the high-rises' caged, open-air hallways, and watched them engage in fantasies and endure nightmares behind the bolted doors of their apartments.

Cabrini-Green was built in the 1950s as a collection of tidy low-rise buildings that replaced a black and Italian immigrant slum. Residents could be fined for

treading on the project's tidy lawns.

But money ran short. The high-rises were built on the cheap, and now roughly 90 per cent of the city's 150,000 public housing residents do not report earning any income outside of their welfare checks, the Chicago Housing Authority's chief of staff, Katie Kelly, said.

One-quarter of the authority's 41,000 apartments, the nation's second-largest system after New York's, are uninhabitable, and there are plans to demolish three of Cabrini-Green's most crime-ridden and vandalised high-rises.

The authority's director, Vincent Lane, has secured

\$50 million in federal funding out of the \$350 million needed to recreate Cabrini-Green as a mixed-income, mixed-race neighbourhood that would blend with its upscale surroundings.

"A lot of time and energy is wasted on whose fault Cabrini is. Is it the establishment's fault? Is it the fault of the people who live there? Is it the police's fault? Is it the school system's fault?" Coyle said.

"It doesn't matter anymore. Things are so bad that all that matters is what we can do about it."

"Baseball, obviously, isn't the solution. It's a symbol. A symbol that needs some depth."

Sons carry on folksinger Tommy Makem's legacy

By Christine Gardner
Reuters

PORTSMOUTH, New Hampshire — Go ahead. Do a double take.

No. It's not Tommy Makem and the Clancy Brothers strumming and singing in the unitarian church in this New Hampshire seaport. It's Makem's sons — Rory, Conor and Shane — and partner Brian Sullivan.

The Makem brothers and Brian Sullivan, all in their 20s, are the new kids on the Irish music block.

The Makems, all from New Hampshire like their father, say they are carrying

on his tradition and that of his mother "source singer" Sarah Makem.

Critics have compared the group to 1960s college-crowd folkies the Kingston Trio. And why not? The '60s are in again, with coffeehouses, poetry readings and folk music making a big comeback. The group's icons include folk heavies Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger.

"They're in the right place at the right time," said Tommy Makem, who got his start when he and another neophyte, Joan Baez, stunned audiences at the 1961 Newport Folk Festival.

"There is a revival," Makem said in an interview. "But then, folk music has never been out of fashion. It's been there all along. It takes a swerve upwards now and then, and it's taking a swerve upwards now."

These days, female singers like Mary Chapin Carpenter are grabbing a lot of attention. "But there's no one doing what the boys are doing," said Makem.

Shane says he was working as a housepainter and delivering pizza when he got the calling for his music career.

Said Rory, munching a

Turkey sandwich in a Portsmouth pub: "I can't see myself in a suit."

Lead guitarist Sullivan, who played with the three in several doomed attempts at rock bands in high school, joined the Makems two years ago, also escaping a career in the food business.

"It was a fateful day in August. I was flipping burgers at the Lone Oak Diner in Rochester, New Hampshire," when he got a call from Rory, said Sullivan, sounding like Charlie On The MTA. The Kingston Trio tune the group recorded for the 1992 20th Century Fox film *Primary*

Motive.

But separating their talent from their father's isn't easy. "A lot of people don't like us. They think we're just punky kids capitalising on our father's name," said Rory.

Admittedly, Makem helped them get their first gigs, at his Irish Pavilion Club in New York City. These included some choice appearances, including one in Bob Dylan's 30th anniversary show at Madison Square Garden.

But, says the veteran singer, "I think once people hear them, they know they're their own men."

They do their share of

traditional Celtic songs, some passed down from Sarah Makem, who memorised thousands of tunes from spinners and weavers working in the linen mills of her native Keady, County Armagh — songs that helped catapult Tommy Makem to fame with the Clancy brothers.

But the Makem brothers and Sullivan put themselves more in the "Celtic rock" wave of the Bothy Band and others.

Sullivan draws applause when he veers off into rock and country riffs absorbed from his heroes — Hank Williams, Rolling Stone Keith Richards and Brian

May of Queen.

"The purists hate us," says Rory.

But it's likely that in Ireland itself, where country-western is the latest rage, they might be a hit, said Portsmouth bluesman Bob Halperin, who took a recent trip to Dublin.

If they're iconoclasts when it comes to Irish music, they admit followers of Pearl Jam or Nirvana might shy away.

"A lot of people probably think we're old-fashioned. So many people our age don't know enough about the past, their own heritage or ours," says Rory. "A lot of people we play for think

folk music is Peter, Paul and Mary or anybody with a guitar."

"We're the four squarest guys on the planet," says Brian. Confessing, "I still want to be on the cover of People magazine or Rolling Stone. Who wouldn't?"

Does the group remind Tommy Makem of himself when he started out?

"Not at all," says Makem. "I enjoyed what I did when I did it. I hope they do too."

The group released its first 12-song CD and cassette, "Out Standing In A Field, three weeks ago and is currently touring the U.S. west and midwest.

Michel Petrucciani — triumph of the spirit

By Charles J. Gans
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — As a young boy growing up in a small French town, Michel Petrucciani became smitten when he first heard Duke Ellington. His parents bought him a pink toy piano, but the precocious 5-year-old broke it because it didn't look or sound like the ducal instrument.

Finally, his father brought home a slightly battered real piano.

"I fell in love with the piano watching Duke on TV," said Petrucciani, who has become one of the top contemporary jazz pianists during the past dozen years he's spent living in the United States.

"It's probably the only instrument you can play alone and not miss anything — you have the percussion, the big orchestra, the solo line. ... It's really the most complete instrument ever, but it's also very difficult to play."

Almost 25 years later, Petrucciani finally got his chance to pay a belated thank you to Ellington last year on a solo piano album. Promenade With Duke, with his interpretations of seven Ellington standards

and two originals in an Ellingtonian mood.

Rather than slavishly imitate the original, Petrucciani reinterprets them, for example, by changing the chords or varying the tempo. "Caravan" is played slightly faster than the original with Middle Eastern colourings added. The introduction to Take The 'A' Train rumbles like a subway in the background.

"I prepared a lot mentally, but did not work on the music too much because I wanted to keep it fresh," Petrucciani said. "I wanted to play more the feeling that Duke brought to my heart than just play like a good student of Ellington's music."

On the surface, the 31-year-old Frenchman would seem to share little in way of common background with Ellington except for their instrument and love for the same musical mistress — jazz.

But there is a deeper spiritual link.

Ellington struggled against the prevailing racism of his time to become recognised as one of the most innovative 20th-century American composers. Despite the obstacles, Ellington did not succumb

to bitterness or rage. Instead, his music reflected beauty and passion, a sense of racial pride, and spirituality.

Petrucciani, who was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, or "glass bones disease," has battled another form of discrimination — against the disabled. His disease is marked by a calcium deficiency that makes bones brittle and easily breakable and retards growth.

Petrucciani's music does not reflect the pain he has felt. Instead, it boasts a gallic joie de vivre. His playing is often romantic and melodic, yet it can also be witty.

"I'm a sarcastic person," he said in accented English. "There's always a funny side to life and I think it reflects in my music too."

"I like to laugh about things that are sometimes dramatic or serious... because of who I am and all the problems I had as a person who has a handicap."

As a jazz pianist, Petrucciani's primary influences include Bill Evans, Art Tatum, Oscar Peterson and Bud Powell. But what makes him different is his classical training and Fran-

co-Italian background.

"I like a melodic touch to my music," he said. "I guess that's my Italian background — my father's Italian and my mother's French. When I play piano I think of the opera singers — with that kind of really up front voice, very bright and very understandable."

Petrucciani's music does not reflect the pain he has felt. Instead, it boasts a gallic joie de vivre. His playing is often romantic and melodic, yet it can also be witty. He stands about 3 feet (one-metre) tall and weighs 65 pounds (30 kilogrammes). In crowded jazz clubs, his manager cradles Petrucciani in his arms and carries him to the piano.

Petrucciani stands about 3 feet (one-metre) tall and weighs 65 pounds (30 kilogrammes). In crowded jazz clubs, his manager cradles Petrucciani in his arms and carries him to the piano, which is fitted with a cus-

tom-built peddle extension to accommodate his tiny legs.

"The older I get the more self-conscious I am about my size," said Petrucciani, seated on the piano bench in the basement rehearsal room of his apartment in Manhattan's East Village. "This is a world for normal

Today, he helps in fund-raising and meets with children who share his handicap.

Ironically, he might never have gotten where he is were it not for his handicap — a musical blessing in disguise when he was growing up in the town of Montellier in southeastern France. "Instead of playing soccer outside with the kids, I spent a lot of time at home practising on the piano because of my physical handicap," he said. "I could stay in front of the piano for five or six hours a day instead of an hour... And it all adds up over the years."

His father Antoine, a jazz guitarist, let Michel listen to his jazz record collection, but insisted that he first receive classical piano training. Petrucciani, who was constantly in and out of the hospital because of bone breaks, neglected his school work, but not the piano.

Petrucciani played locally in a family jazz band with his father and brothers, bassist Louis and guitarist Philippe. At 13, he made his professional debut at an outdoor jazz festival in nearby Cloulat with American trumpeter Clark Terry.

By age 17, Petrucciani

had moved to Paris and recorded his first album, *Flash*, and quickly became the wunderkind of European jazz. In 1981, the 18-year-old defied his father, who feared for his safety, and moved to the United States.

Through a friend, he met saxophonist Charles Lloyd, then living in retirement in Big Sur, California. After playing together all night with Petrucciani at his home, Lloyd decided to form a band and tour again.

Petrucciani spent three years with Lloyd's quartet, recording two albums. He then moved to New York, formed his own trio and released his first album for Blue Note, *Pianism*, in 1986. On later albums, he switched from an acoustic trio to a quintet with electric bass, percussion and a synthesizer.

After seven years, Petrucciani has bid adieu to Blue Note. At the beginning of the year, the label released *The Best Of Michel Petrucciani — The Blue Note Years* — featuring 12 tunes from the five albums he recorded before last year's Ellington tribute.

The album offers an overview of the many influences in his compositions: Hard-

swinging jazz, blues, Latin and African rhythms, Brazilian melodies, and European romanticism.

Petrucciani has now signed with a French label, Dreyfus Jazz, for whom he will also produce records. He has bought a house in a Paris suburb so he can spend more time with his two young sons who live nearby with their mother.

He intends to keep a smaller New York apartment, but wants to re-experience France for a while.

His first album for Dreyfus, *Marvellous*, has just been released. It's an acoustic album with a stellar rhythm section of drummer Tony Williams and bassist Dave Holland and a French string quartet, which he uses for colour background and comping.

Petrucciani likes to switch from solo performances to larger ensembles, and from acoustic to electric groups — to keep from getting bored and whet his audience's interest.

"I think life is hard enough not to have fun," he said. "I'm really having a good time discovering my instrument and the art form I've been practising now for 20 years. I'm learning every day and it's incredible."

Surgeon's 'death' gives life to autobiographical tale

By Michael Connor
Reuter

NEW YORK — Yale Medical School surgeon and writer Richard Selzer was pronounced dead in 1991 but fluttered back to life after 10 minutes, startling a nurse scribbling final notes on his hospital chart.

The pronouncement, so convincing that doctors and nurses had walked away from a high-tech fight to keep his heart going, came

on the 23rd day of a coma caused by what was believed to be legionnaires disease.

"The Milky Way flashed by and I was gone," Dr. Selzer, now 65, said of his lapse into coma.

But on awakening Dr. Selzer had more than just substantial medical problems such as delirium and madness to face. He could remember nearly nothing of his coma and little of his pronounced death and awakening. He experienced

none of the fireworks, brilliant white lights and out-of-body sensations reported by others whose hearts have stopped and come back.

For a celebrated writer to essays on medicine's emotional mysteries, autobiographical books, magazine pieces, horror tales and literary short stories — many with a stylistic bent towards the gothic — these missing memories were no small matter.

Dr. Selzer's coma, heart stoppage and revival were a

story. A great story, one he was not going to let get away and which he has just published as *Raising the Dead: A Doctor's Encounter With His Own Mortality*.

"The reason I wrote that book was to recapture that experience which of course I had no sensory recollection (of)," Dr. Selzer said in a recent interview.

"I would try to reconstruct a coma. I would do it through symbol, metaphor and imagery and the few

tiny memories I could retrieve."

Memories from those 23 days include a bright light, presumably a physician using a penlight in a search for consciousness. But in Dr. Selzer's coma, enriched by his literary imagination, the experience was different.

"I saw a grove of white birch trees or a herd of white-faced cattle. I remember the sensation of being confined...as though I were confined to an upper berth of a Pullman (train sleeping car) travelling endless prairies at night," he said.

Dr. Selzer, a practicing general surgeon for decades, at first sought out his medical records in a bid to reconstruct his coma but they were lost. By the time they were located he was well into his own literary imaginings, informed by decades of caring for coma patients.

"All day and night, slits has settled in his veins, turning them solid," Dr. Selzer wrote of Day 22 of

his coma, just hours before his heart stopped.

"...A slow slide of clot advances through his body. It began in the venules of the arms and legs, filled the larger veins, the iliac, the inferior Vena Cava, flowing slowly toward the heart. By morning, it will have achieved the right auricle, a single muffled thump, and it will be hurled to the lungs, and there it will stay hardening into a cast of the pulmonary circulation..."

Dr. Selzer wrote.

After reviving, Dr. Selzer said, he was crazy.

And while physically recovering from the coma in an infectious disease ward of a Connecticut hospital, Dr. Selzer's mind wandered over and over to ancient Egypt, Father Damien's 19th-century leper colony of Molokai in the Hawaiian Islands, and a mediaeval abbey named for Saint Ronan on the Irish coast.

"On all sides save the one facing the sea, the abbey is enclosed by a gray stone wall. It is of such a height

that the top cannot be seen for the clouds that settle upon it," Dr. Selzer wrote.

Dr. Selzer no longer practices medicine and has in past books celebrated the cutting-edge skills of doctors, but believes the cure for his madness and fantasies came during a soothing bath administered by an Irish nurse named Patrick.

"You have been telling stories, all right. Then, we'll forget about it. No looking back. I'll miss our visits to the abbey of Saint Ronan, though..."

Dr. Selzer quotes Patrick as saying, "At last the sick man is lifted forth from the tub, Clean, calm and sane," Dr. Selzer wrote of himself.

In the interview, Dr. Selzer said he remembered in detail much of his post-coma recovery, including fantasies, visitors and conversations, and dismisses critics who object to his imaginative renderings of his coma.

"I do not believe the future belongs to the constipated," he said. "I don't do

case histories any more. I re-invented my coma."

Dr. Selzer said his coma, near-death and hospitalisation changed him, hurting his literary imagination and making it harder to write.

"Something with the synapses," he said. Adding his physician dismisses such complaints.

But, he said, he was very happy to be alive and would never take back the first word he mumbled after his heart resumed beating.

Yes.

"... Everything begins with yes," he wrote in his book.

"That is how the first two bits of energy in the universe greeted each other, Collided. Boom and yes there was life. So it is with the resurrected. Once again his throat fills with the word until the pressure of it is unbearable and he cries out in the hoarse voice that sticks to his jaws... Yes saying yes to life. Accepting once again the burden and thrill of it."

Mysterious death of Idaho man solved 15 years later

By A.J. Hostettler
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The mysterious death of an Idaho man from a pneumonia-like illness so perplexed a rookie federal health investigator that he kept his personal notes on the case for 15 years.

Suddenly, a few months ago, those files turned out to be much more than a sentimental keepsake. That's when Dr. Rick Goodman recognized that details about the death — his first case — matched those in a report describing a respiratory disease that was killing dozens of people in the southwest.

"It just hit me," said Dr. Goodman, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) epidemiologist. "I'd been staring at a case of hantavirus in the face."

The Idaho man's death in 1978 is no longer a mystery. It's the earliest confirmed case in the United States of hantaviral pulmonary syndrome, as the disease is called.

The hantavirus family is named for the Hantaan River in Korea, where the first

strain was discovered decades ago. That virus infected about 3,000 American soldiers during the Korean War, killing 190 by destroying their kidneys. The virus itself was not identified until more than 20 years later.

That finding is important because learning the history of a virus helps scientists determine what causes epidemics, said Dr. Gary Simpson, an infectious disease specialist with the New Mexico Department of Health.

After determining what factors lead to epidemics, health department can develop "sentinels," or tip-offs, to alert the public when the same conditions arise again — just as they now use in the southwest to prevent outbreaks of bubonic plague, he said.

But until last summer, researchers were unaware of this form of hantavirus or its ability to attack a victim's lungs. Hantavirus, in an even rarer form that destroys the kidneys, has been in the United States for years without causing epidemics.

Only recently have scientists learned that the respiratory form may be just

as old. No one knows why it has resurfaced so fatally.

Since the outbreak almost a year ago, Dr. Goodman has edited more than a dozen reports for the CDC about the rodent-borne hantavirus and the respiratory disease it causes.

It wasn't until December, while reading about another suspected case, that Dr. Goodman linked it to the death he reviewed shortly after joining the CDC's investigative epidemiology team.

Still nostalgic about his first work assignment and puzzled by the death of an otherwise healthy 34-year-old man, Dr. Goodman kept his personal notes on the case, even as he moved from research to administration as a CDC editor.

"I tore open the filing cabinet, found the notes," and showed them to a colleague, who also was struck by the similarity to hantavirus.

After making the connection, Dr. Goodman gathered autopsy specimens from "state health" officials and the University of Utah Hospital, where the man died on Sept. 22, 1978.

Dr. Goodman confirmed

his suspicions after painstaking laboratory tests showed that the virus — the same strain that struck the southwest — had killed the man.

Knowing the full history of such a virus — that it can start with just a single case and lead to outbreaks years later — forms the basis for the CDC's research and prevention efforts, Dr. Goodman said.

But for the Idaho man, even knowing the cause of his death would have given physicians little help in curing him. There is still no treatment today for the disease.

Hantaviral pulmonary syndrome is believed to be carried in airborne particles of dried feces or urine from rodents. In the southwest — and the Idaho case — the carrier is the deer mouse. Researchers are still trying to identify the rodent carrier in cases in Florida, Louisiana, California, and the northeast. So far, the CDC has confirmed 60 cases.

Early symptoms resemble the flu, but the disease progresses rapidly to breathing difficulties and shock. It is fatal about 60 per cent of the time.

By Cynthia Johnson
Reuter

LONDON — Insights into the working of the brain and human genetic makeup are opening options for altering mood and personality through drugs and even gene therapy.

The advances offer hope for millions whose lives are blighted by illnesses such as severe depression.

They also raise the spectre of "cosmetic psychopharmacology" — using drugs to move beyond moods to "enhancing" personality in ways society or individuals may perceive as beneficial. And of future prenatal screening for detecting genetically-linked illnesses like Manic Depression.

The twin bestsellers of Eli Lilly's anti-depressant drug prozac (fluoxetine) and U.S. psychiatrist Peter Kramer's recent paean to the pill "listening to prozac" have highlighted the promise and perils of drug use for mood or personality change.

With 1.2 billion annual sales worldwide, prozac is the most popular of a new generation of anti-depressants which have fewer side effects and are less toxic in higher doses.

Like its chemical cousins zoloft, made by Pfizer, and SmithKline Beecham's paxil it works by blocking the reabsorption by cells of the mood enhancing brain chemical serotonin.

Since its launch in 1987 prozac has been used by 11 million people, more than half of them in the United States.

Many severely depressed people have benefitted from the drug, doctors say. Early concerns that prozac might be particularly prone to prompting violence or suicide have been largely dispelled.

But, says the author of a forthcoming review of the evidence of links between prozac and other anti-depressants and suicide, the issue highlights the need for care in taking such drugs. "There are risks with any anti-depressant drug... They can make people feel

Prozac — the breakfast of champions?

worse," said Dr. David Healy with the Department of Psychological Medicine at the North Wales Hospital, Denbigh.

"But there is no evidence that prozac does that more than anything else and these risks are much less than leaving the condition untreated. Prozac may have just brought into the open that these kinds of reactions can happen."

In most countries prozac is officially approved for treating clinical depression and obsessive compulsive disorders. But as even Dr. Kramer's patients show its use has in some cases extended to those simply seeking to feel more cheerful, relaxed and self-assured.

Eli Lilly says that such uses are not extensive. "The vast majority of patients are taking prozac for clinical depression," a company spokesman said.

But critics say that due to their perceived low side effects, there may be a growing temptation by ambitious professionals and others to use drugs like prozac to improve performance and competitiveness.

That temptation may increase with research showing that personality traits ranging from shyness to impulsiveness are due to particular molecules acting on specific parts of the brain and therefore can be chemically influenced.

Writing recently on prozac in the New Republic magazine David Rothman, a professor of social medicine at Columbia University, expressed concern at the use of prozac by people who were not sick by standard definitions.

He drew a parallel with children who had been treated with growth hormones without evidence of disease because being short was seen as a social disadvantage.

become alcoholics. If cocaine is around, they become cocaine users. If there's food as a way of giving a reward, those children might grow up to be obese."

His findings, published in the Journal of Eating Disorders, centre on a dopamine receptor gene that is responsible for sensations of pleasure or reward. A particular form of that gene, previously linked to alcohol and cocaine abuse, may also cause adults to crave carbohydrates and eat too much, he found.

it is important not to romanticise such a destructive condition nor minimise the benefits sufferers may gain from early identification and treatment. But she is also cautious about society's approach to such illnesses.

"What remains troubling is whether we have diminished the more extraordinary among us... by discussing them in terms of psychopathology or illnesses of mood. Do we — in our rush to diagnose, to heal and perhaps even alter their genes — compromise the respect we should feel for their difference, independence, strength of mind and individuality?"

Concludes Dr. Rothman: "Kramer is only the first of what will be an army of physicians who will publicise and prescribe the new technologies."

"Today we stand and listen to prozac tomorrow we will listen to a new hormone and the day after tomorrow to a new genetic manipulation. I can conceive of strict rules and procedures (to regulate this) but I have grave difficulty imagining them implemented and respected."

ANSWERS

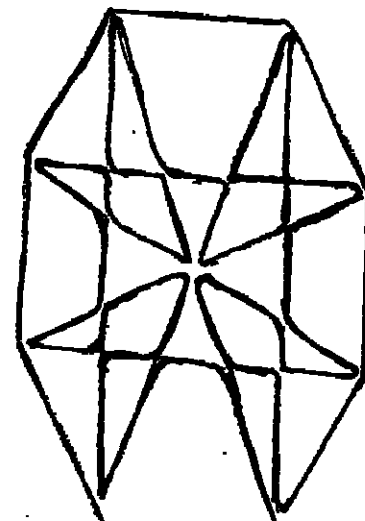
BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

- Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.
- China.
- The squirrel.
- A shrill whistle expressing disapproval (especially at a performance in a theatre).
- A kind of tree. Monkeys find it difficult to climb. Correct name: Chilean Pine.
- It was the remainder of the Long Parliament. The Long Parliament was purged in 1648 — it then became "The Rump".

PUZZLES

- (A) RIDDLE ME:
- Because it makes an arm farm.
 - A date tree.
 - Windows.
 - Ireland — its capital is always Dublin.
 - Because they are always looking down in the mouth.

- (B) ALL IN A LINE:
- The solution is shown in the diagram, where the lines are separated at intersecting points for the sake of clarity.



WEEKEND CROSSWORD

CELEBS IN ACTION

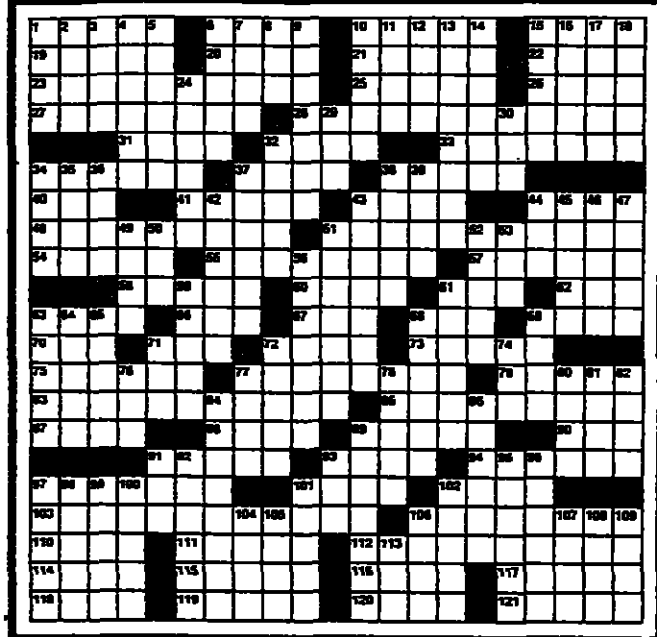
By Janet R. Beaudet

- ACROSS
- Witch subject
 - Herring relative
 - Famous houses
 - Hooper and Grand Coulee
 - Character in "The Tempest"
 - Timothy's
 - Character in "The Tempest"
 - Smells
 - Actor Jack
 - "Holes Landing" across grins
 - Dogma
 - One of three famous canines
 - Take a guess
 - 11's Superman handles
 - Shogun ropes?
 - John and eggs
 - Actor Raymond
 - Walk (verb)

- DOWN
- Geological angle
 - Son of Aphrodite
 - Dryer residue
 - Bonus dwellers?
 - Poplar trees
 - Jeremy of "L.A. Law"
 - Dale Gribble's
 - Everything
 - Advantage
 - Engage
 - German river
 - 1000
 - Like the weepers
 - 1500
 - Part of Cyprus
 - Eating
 - Certain drinks
 - Edward
 - Runway
 - Runway
 - Runway

- ACROSS
- Ruffle
 - Rocky
 - Famished
 - Edgar
 - Sch. sub.
 - Small horse
 - Stop the progress
 - Explosive sound
 - Drumsticks
 - 1300's name
 - Storming
 - Does stage work
 - Rocked
 - Playing marble
 - Marsh bird
 - Quarantined, at times
 - Ice cream holder
 - Across Anderson
 - Multiplying
 - Breakfast favorite
 - 1300's name
 - Paint the town red
 - Operated
 - Get to one's feet
 - Threats of the silent
 - Church dignitary
 - Improves
 - Desk item
 - Unusually noisily
 - Strangers
 - One no longer working
 - Valentine fabric
 - Blissful abodes
 - Birds
 - Fiber from
 - Scrumming
 - Support for a bridge
 - Wast
 - Consistent
 - Movie laboriously
 - Chutney
 - Villain's look
 - Shank
 - Electrified particle

- DOWN
- Have the lead
 - Armed conflict
 - Cons
 - Aroma
 - Arms making a clear response
 - Warble
 - Handker
 - Window glass
 - 1100
 - Singer Della
 - Teacher's domain
 - Otherwise
 - 1700's name
 - 1800's name
 - Speed contest
 - 1800's name
 - 2200's name
 - Emerson
 - 2400's name
 - Reactor's sign
 - Pocket bread
 - Camera part
 - Garage cover, for short
 - Incursion
 - Alter end of a church
 - Went
 - Uplight
 - Implore
 - Ornament
 - Robert



Last Week's Cryptograms

- Cold bank teller asked good friend for identification before cashing his check.
- A fine smile is a marvelous curve that can set a lot of things straight.
- Some folks call these also flowers yellow daisies, but others call them black-eyed Susans.
- Unclear unclear policy, or none, our bureaucrats will always appear to be busy.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. UMOYUMI SRAMSOYTRAMU UMSWEET
WHMSOTRAWOMEQ PPT ANWO OUWQT RE
GRAGAT WAI TPAQ CWUT RE QKYSQ
CEKCGMT.

—By Rita Salvato

2. IFPY OLD RIIF BIIG CUPP GDDM BIIF
CEDA ED DLY OAF OFFY DERY UA FDDM
FUTE OMPD MUD.

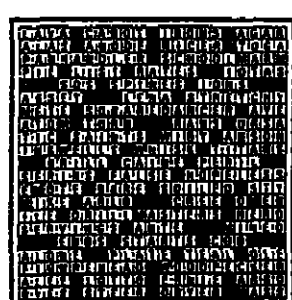
—By Ed Huddleston

3. PERMAABAD. OLDSAW TLPLDPES
PAAMAABAD, NEW PAA US NUT PRESAG.

—By Frank N. Zeln

4. DUBKABK DUCUBKA JOCKBA DXLU ZMLU
DCJY DOKSTMPR DJJOP YKXISSXA
ZUTMSKASU.

—By Duane H. McGogy



The Cities of the Plain

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

This is the second of a two-part article examining the broader tradition of Lot's association with the Cities of the Plain which included the infamous towns of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In most people's minds, the infamous biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah evoke visions of a wickedness that the Lord punished by a fiery destruction of these two cities. The Genesis 19 passage recounts: "Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord and he looked down towards Sodom and Gomorrah and towards all the land of the valley, and behold, and lo, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace."

Sodom and Gomorrah are thought to have been two of the five "Cities of the Plain", mentioned in this and other biblical accounts in the book of Genesis. One of the fascinating sidelights of the work that Walter Rast and Tom Schaub have directed in the Southern Ghors since the mid-1960s has been a revival of the scholarly debate about the location and date of the five Cities of the Plain. For the past 200 years, archaeologists, historians and biblical scholars have hotly debated all possible aspects of the five Cities of the Plain: Were they actually five cities? Where were they located? In which historical period did they exist? Indeed, did they exist at all or are they simply an ancient Semitic legend or folk-tale that was preserved in the literary evidence of the Bible?

When they conducted their survey of the south-eastern shores of the Dead Sea in 1973, Rast and Schaub knew of the Early Bronze Age city of Bab Al Dhira, which had existed during most of the 3rd millennium BC. When they finished their survey, they had identified at least five Early Bronze Age settlements, all of which dated from around 3000-2350 BC. Most, with the notable exception of Safi, appear to be walled towns. The five most prominent sites, from north to south, are Bab Al Dhira, Numeira, Safi, Feifeh and Kneizirah. Could these EB sites be seriously considered as the remnants of the five Cities of the Plain? Could they possibly correspond to the five biblical cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zebolim and "Bela (that is, Zoar)"?

In the preliminary report of their 1973 survey, Rast and Schaub stated: "...the sites may bear on the biblical tradition of the 'cities of the plain' (Genesis 14, 18, 19), long believed to be located in this area and sometimes thought to have been submerged beneath the shallow waters of the southern basin of the Dead Sea. If the biblical traditions find roots going back as far as the Early Bronze Age, the sites reported here may be of some importance."

The debate was further fuelled by the epigraphist of the Ebla excavations in northern Syria, Giovanni Pettinato, who thought, in 1975, that the five Cities of the Plain were mentioned in some of the 3rd millennium BC cuneiform tablets excavated in the rich archives of Ebla. He suggested that all five cities were mentioned in one of the tablets, listed in the same order as in the Bible. Most of the Ebla tablets date

to the period from around 2650-2350 BC — which is precisely during the lifetime of Bab Al Dhira, Numeira and the other Early Bronze Age sites in south Jordan. Pettinato's ideas have been seriously challenged by other epigraphists who dispute his readings. While the controversy about the correct interpretation of the Ebla tablets may or may not shed light on the location and date of the five Cities of the Plain, it remains possible that Ebla may have had commercial contacts with contemporary Early Bronze Age towns in south Jordan. The independent archaeological evidence that has been gleaned from the south Jordan landscape itself continues to fuel the scholarly debate.

The riddle of the Cities of the Plain is confounded by the fact that the only historical reference to the cities is in the Bible, and the Bible is a notoriously imprecise guide to historical fact, geographical location or exact and verifiable historical dates. As Schaub has noted, talking about the Genesis accounts: "The tradition of the Cities of the Plain is a complex of ancient and hazy recollections that probably go back to some actual event. When one tries to consider the possible identification of our EB sites in south Jordan with the Cities of the Plain, there are a number of things to keep in mind. The long history of the biblical texts is very intertwined, and it is hard to fix a firm date for the historical traditions that may lie behind the literary traditions."

The Bible provides several clues about the location of the Cities of the Plain: they were located east of the Dead Sea, near Moab, in an area of lush vegetation associated with a kikkar, or circular plain, near some barren, desolate regions, and also associated with bitumen and salt formations. All of these elements are found in the south-east plain of the Dead Sea and some of them, but not all, are also found north of the Dead Sea. The presence of five EB town sites could be seen as good evidence for an association with the Cities of the Plain, though Schaub also warns that "we need to qualify the biblical tradition, for there is nothing magical about the number five. There is some serious doubt among scholars about whether there were ever five cities that existed at once."

The Genesis 18 and 19 texts only mention the destruction of two towns, Sodom and Gomorrah, though all five towns are mentioned in the Genesis 14 accounts. Some biblical scholars feel that the Genesis accounts may go back to a single town. Others feel that the biblical accounts may have reflected events that took place at two cities north of the Dead Sea and two south of the Dead Sea. The city of Zoar, with which the Lot traditions are also connected, may have been added to these at a later stage to produce the tradition of the five Cities of the Plain that has been handed down to us today.

Genesis 14 recounts the tale of an alliance of four kings from the north (probably Syria) who marched to do battle against five kings of the Cities of the Plain, who had refused to pay tribute to the northern kings. The five kings of south Jordan were beaten and their cities destroyed, and the four kings returned to Syria having taken captive Lot, Abraham's nephew. Abraham pursued them to near Damascus, defeated them, and returned to the area of the Cities of the Plain with his freed nephew Lot.

In the Genesis 13 accounts, Abraham and Lot have an argument and part ways: "And

Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw that the Jordan valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt in the direction of Zoar; this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan valley, and Lot journeyed east; thus they separated from each other. Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan, while Lot dwelt among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord."

The date of the archaeological remains in south Jordan appears to be out of sequence with the generally accepted date for the Abraham period, when the Bible recounts the events associated with the Cities of the Plain. Most scholars now assume that Abraham existed around 1900-1800 BC, while others place him as late as 1700 BC or as early as 2300 BC. Such respected biblical scholars as David N. Freedman feel the Genesis 14 stories "most likely... belong roughly to the period around 2400 and 2100, perhaps around 2300-2200."

Willem C. van Hattum, writing in Biblical Archaeologist magazine in 1981, believes that the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, described in Genesis 18, 19, should be placed between 2400-2300 BC. The major destruction levels at Bab Al Dhira and Numeira date from around 2350 BC — that is, 400-500 years earlier than the generally accepted date for Abraham's times, though very close to or precisely within the period that some respected scholars associate with the biblical accounts of the Cities of the Plain. It may be noteworthy that at least three of the five sites surveyed by Rast and Schaub (Bab Al Dhira, Numeira and Feifeh) show considerable evidence of a violent, fiery destruction and all five were never reinhabited after their destruction or abandonment at the end of the Early Bronze Age.

Rast and Schaub are very careful to avoid claiming that the five EB sites they have identified are the archaeological remains of the five Cities of the Plain. They feel that the evidence produced by their survey has contributed some substantial new information that should be examined by those who are interested in the debate about the time and place of the Cities of the Plain — if, in fact, these five cities existed together in one place and at one time. As Schaub has noted: "Keeping in mind all the qualifications, if one is looking for possible candidates for the Cities of the Plain, the only ones we really have in the south-east Dead Sea valley are the two excavated sites of Bab Al Dhira and Numeira, and the surveyed sites of Safi, Feifeh and Kneizirah."

Even within the Rast and Schaub team, the scholarly argument is strong. Dr. Michael Coogan who supervised the expedition's last three seasons of excavations at Numeira, rejects the possibility of the five Dead Sea plain EB sites being the Cities of the Plain. "I cannot see any good probable connections between our five sites and the cities of the plain," he has said. "The choice of the number five is arbitrary, and in any case there are other Early Bronze Age sites in the area."

He also thinks the 2350 BC date of the destruction of the south Jordan sites is too early to coincide with the accounts of Abraham and Lot, which he says, most scholars date to around 1800 BC. Several biblical scholars have attempted over the years to identify the Early Bronze Age settlements



Early Bronze Age pottery excavated at the monastery of St. Lot (Photos courtesy of Dino Politis)

in south Jordan with the Cities of the Plain. One substantial point in support of this association is the evidence in the 6th century AD Byzantine period text, the Early Bronze Age wall paintings along the south-east Dead Sea plain came into being several hundred years after the establishment of major urban civilisations in neighbouring Mesopotamia and Egypt. By around 3300 BC, the pattern of human settlement started to change in the land of Jordan/Palestine. The long tradition of open farming villages that had pertained in the area throughout the Chalcolithic period in the 4th millennium BC was suddenly modified. The open farming, metal-working, and tool-and-pottery-making settlements were joined by newly established walled towns during the last several centuries of the 4th millennium. Over a period of 300-400 years, the phenomenon of the "walled town" had fully developed, though with considerable local variations throughout Jordan/Palestine. By around 3000-2900 BC, there were consistent new cultural elements throughout the land, traceable in ceramics, architecture and defensive walled settlements.

Between the two flanking powers of Mesopotamia and Egypt, a distinctive brand of walled urban culture had developed in Jordan/Palestine by the early 3rd millennium BC — perhaps, as Schaub suggests, as a response to pressures from Egypt and Mesopotamia. Another possible reason why the town-dwellers built strong defensive walls is that there may have been friction among the separate settlements within Jordan/Palestine. This is less likely, most scholars agree, because of the shared culture that seems to have pertained in the land. The walled towns of Bab Al Dhira and Numeira are particularly important in clarifying many aspects of cultural development during this key historical juncture, generally accepted as the take-off point for a rather durable brand of urbanism that has persisted, with some changes, to this day. The evidence from the south-east Dead Sea plain must also be assessed together with the substantial remains of EB I walled towns throughout central and south Jordan, in the ancient lands of Moab and Edom.

"Something important was happening in the area in the transition period around 3300-2900 BC," Schaub has noted. "For reasons that we are still trying to understand, people were beginning to organise themselves into walled towns, often located on elevated hills or promontories. The surface evidence indicates that there are substantial remains of walled towns from the Early Bronze Age I period, particularly in southern Jordan." In the final analysis, he notes, the riddle about the location of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other biblical Cities of the Plain is interesting and intriguing, but the more important message emerging from work along the Dead Sea plain relates to "the richness of the Early Bronze Age in Jordan, particularly the EB I period."

The major elements of the puzzle that we have to work with remain the descriptions and hazy accounts in the Bible. If one tries to fit the information in the Bible with the evidence on the ground, most scholars agree that the probable location of the five Cities of the Plain is the south end of the Dead Sea. And if one looks for remains of Bronze Age cities in this area, there is considerable evidence on the ground. But can the two be connected? Is there sufficient evidence to say with some certainty that the archaeological remains at Bab Al Dhira, Numeira, Safi, Feifeh and Kneizirah are the remnants of the biblical cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zebolim and "Bela (that is, Zoar)"?

As intriguing as the possibility may be, reputable and cautious scholars such as Rast and Schaub insist that the evidence remains more intriguing than conclusive. Only further excavations at other EB sites in the Southern Ghors will provide the additional hard evidence that might firmly prove or disprove the possible identification of the five EB cities with the Cities of the Plain. This problem has been a rather interesting sidelight of the project along the south-east Dead Sea plain, though the greater value of the work has been the

Israel and PLO begin talks in Cairo

(Continued from page 1)

Israel-PLO accord.

Dr. Shaath said the two parties would also meet in Cairo on Thursday, along with international donors, to discuss details of the Palestinian police force which will enter the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in the West Bank after an Israeli troop withdrawal planned for April 13. PLO sources said.

He said one of the objectives of Thursday's talks was to agree on the size of the Palestinian police.

The accord between the PLO and Israel on limited self-rule for the Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho was due to be signed this month but the massacre threw the talks into disarray.

Dr. Shaath rejected Israeli suggestions that Red Crescent and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) offices would satisfy a U.N. Security Council resolution calling for an international presence to protect Palestinians.

In Amman, PLO leader Faisal Al Hussein said the Israeli proposals for Palestinian security were so far insufficient to draw the PLO back to the peace talks.

In a related development, several Israeli legislators said Israeli leaders were considering a plan to remove one of six settlement sites from the heart of Hebron, a move that could

coax the PLO back to peace talks.

The PLO has demanded all settlers be removed from Hebron.

Israeli officials have been wary of appearing to cave in to PLO demands to alter previous agreements because of the massacre.

But media reports and officials' comments Wednesday seemed to indicate the government was considering removing at least one site — Tel Rumeida, where seven families live in trailers near a former archaeological dig.

The Jerusalem Post daily reported that Brig. Gen. Shaul Muhfaz, the West Bank military commander, had already asked settlers there if they would move out at least temporarily because of severe danger to their safety. The settlers refused, it said.

A source close to the governing Labour Party said imposing the move was being considered "as a symbolic act, and then presenting it as a gesture to the PLO to get peace talks restarted."

Labour Party legislator Ephraim Sneh, a former West Bank military governor who is close to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, said removing Tel Rumeida "is possible."

"It would be the most urgent, most justified and most feasible move," he said.

Mr. Sneh said the case

against Tel Rumeida was bolstered by the fact that two members of the outlawed Kach extremist group, including its fugitive leader Baruch Marzel, lived there. He added that Israeli law generally forbids residence on archaeological sites.

But he downplayed the idea, saying it was not yet "operational."

Benjamin Netanyahu, head of the right-wing Likud opposition, told the Associated Press he had reliable "information about plan" to remove Tel Rumeida. He added at least nine ministers supported removing all 450 Hebron settlers in closed meetings.

Mr. Peres refused to directly confirm or deny a decision was near on Tel Rumeida.

He told legislators that parliament and not right-winger would decide the fate of the settlement in Hebron.

Mr. Peres reacted in a stormy parliament session after Mr. Netanyahu threatened to fight "with all our might" against any attempts to evict the settlers from the city of 110,000 Palestinians.

"You won't show up in Hebron," Peres shouted at Netanyahu. "You will show up in parliament. The parliament decides about Hebron and Hebron doesn't decide for the parliament. This democratic body will decide, and you won't frighten us."

3 Palestinians killed in Hebron

(Continued from page 1)

Hebron has been under military curfew since the massacre. But hundreds of Palestinians sat on rooftops to watch the battle between the soldiers and guerrillas.

One resident described the streets on Tuesday as a "battlefield." Thousands were outside chanting Allahu Akbar. Widespread clashes erupted and the army lit up the sky with flares.

Hospitals and Palestinian sources said Hunduk Zahade,

32, was shot in her home as she watched the clashes outside through her window. At least five others were wounded, hospitals said.

Elsewhere in the West Bank and Gaza, troops shot and wounded seven Palestinians, one a six-month-old girl.

A Palestinian stabbed and wounded an Israeli and a worker from Jamaica in Kibbutz Nahal Oz, a collective farm that borders the occupied Gaza Strip. Israeli radio stations said. The assailant was

caught. In Jerusalem, a Palestinian shot and critically wounded an Israeli security guard on Wednesday at an entrance to the Old City. Israeli police said.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) claimed responsibility for the attack in a call to the AP.

The Palestinian shot the guard in the head, and then grabbed the guard's gun and fled, police said.

Israel offers early pullout

(Continued from page 1)

Israel pledges to start withdrawal of its troops or April 13 or earlier.

Mr. Arafat is facing strong opposition to the resumption of the talks from the Fatah leaders in the occupied territories as well as from his Palestinian partners in the peace talks.

Tunis-based PLO officials said that Israel made the following proposals: — To start an Israeli withdrawal before April 14 in return for the resumption of the talks.

— The International Red Cross will serve as an international observing unit in Hebron to receive complaints from Palestinians regarding Israeli settlers' conduct.

— A Palestinian police force could be deployed in Hebron, provided it remains under Israeli army command, and will not even be on the PLO's payroll.

— Israeli settlers will be gathered in one big settlement in Hebron and Palestinians could "freely" use the

main road in the city.

The PLO officials said Israel refused to work out arrangements enabling the PLO to officially be in charge of financial matters, including the salaries of the Palestinian police.

U.S. special coordinator Dennis Ross was said to have totally supported the Israeli position and insisted that Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin meet as soon as possible.

In an interview with ABC Television Tuesday night, Mr. Arafat accused Israeli army officers of collaborating with settlers to sabotage the peace process.

He dismissed as "exaggeration" reports that his popularity is declining but stressed that he understood the people's fury in the aftermath of the massacre.

Comments by Tunis-based PLO officials indicate that while most reject the Israeli offer as insufficient, some are arguing that it could be a basis for a better deal with which could be worked out at the negotiating table.

Ross reassures Syrian leader

(Continued from page 1)

Washington by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and on Israeli-PLO meetings in Tunis.

Mr. Ross said his discussions with Mr. Assad focused on "next steps on the Israeli-Syrian track," but did not elaborate.

Presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh said Mr. Ross gave Mr. Assad a message from President Bill Clinton dealing with the peace process.

"Agreement was made to continue meetings and contacts within the framework of cooperation to push the peace talks towards its goal," he said.

Mr. Ross said Washington would consult Russia, the other co-sponsor of the Arab-Israeli peace talks, and the other parties involved to decide a precise date for negotiations to resume in April.

During his U.S. trip, Mr. Rabin said peace with Syria justified "painful decisions" Israel would have to make, but he did not say whether this meant a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

German ship turned away from Aqaba

(Continued from page 1)

of the main reasons cited by the inspectors for turning ships away from Aqaba, was also the reason for the Skyman being denied entry to Aqaba despite efforts by the crew of the ship to rearrange cargo for inspection.

Ibrahim Naouri, an official of the agents of the vessel, said inspectors boarded the Skyman four times between Satur-

day and Tuesday before refusing it permission to proceed to Aqaba.

Mr. Muhaisen said the Skyman and the Red Sea Energy were the third and fourth ships to be turned away from Aqaba since the beginning of the year. The two others came back after unloading or rearranging cargo for inspection. The crew of three other vessels managed to rearrange cargo while at sea to

satisfy the inspectors' demands, he said.

According to U.S. Navy figures, the naval task force, which is now supported by four American warships, has queried 19,800 ships over radio, boarded more than 8,000 for closer checks, and turned away 450 since it took up station following the imposition of the sanctions against Iraq in August 1990.

Palestinian company formally launched

(Continued from page 1)

investment would grow to \$200 million," said company spokesman Rajai Masri.

"This is the first major initiative of its kind by the Palestinian private sector in the economic development of the occupied territories," said Mr. Qouria.

The company was registered in Liberia as an off-shore share-holding firm in October 1993, and it will retain that status until the political and economic situation in the occupied territories becomes "more settled," Mr. Masri said.

It was also announced at Wednesday's meeting that the PDII was a 49 per cent shareholder in the West Bank-based Al Ruwad Investment Group, which is a West Bank-registered share-holding company with an initial capital of \$50 million.

Al Ruwad will act as PDII's largest subsidiary in the occupied territories, said Kamal Hassouni, a West Bank investor in PDII and director of Al Ruwad.

"West Bank and Gaza investors have 51 per cent of the shares and our first priority is to build badly needed housing units," Mr. Hassouni said.

PDII will initially concentrate on housing, industry, light industry and the tourism.

The ownership composition is in accordance with Jordanian laws implemented before the 1967 Israeli seizure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. "Local residents must have the majority of the shares," said Raja Shehadeh, a prominent Ramallah-based lawyer, who also addressed the audience and briefed investors on the legal aspects of investment in the occupied territories.

Company shares will be made available to the public once PDII is listed at a stock market. "We don't expect that a Palestinian stock market will develop in the very near future but the PDII stocks will undoubtedly be listed in the stock markets of Arab capitals such as Amman, Beirut and Bahrain," said one of the founders of the company.

The board of directors elected Mr. Shaer as chairman, Munib Masri as vice chairman and Nabil Sarraf as secretary general.

Other members of the board are: The Arab Bank Ltd.; the Cairo-Amman Bank (Yazid Mufit). Said Co., Khalid Abu Hassan, Masira Co., Nabil Shawa, Ramzi Dajouh, Azmi Abdul Hadi, Nidal Spkhan, Riad Saricq, Hussein Sharqawi, Zahi Khoury and the Housing Bank.



A view of the mosaic floor in the central aisle of the basilica of St. Lot

Higher U.S. interest rate seen as intercepting inflation

WASHINGTON (R) — The Federal Reserve's (Fed's) decision to seek higher interest rates is seen by analysts as both a declaration of political independence and a bow shot at the central bank's historic enemy — inflation.

The Fed, for the second time in as many months, said it would sanction an increase in interest rates, using language that told Wall Street that short-term rates should go up by another one-fourth of a point to 3.5 per cent.

Like its last increase, the usually secretive Federal Open Market Committee actually announced its decision, rather than waiting to make its intention known by moves in the market.

But the results were the same with the federal funds rate that banks charge each other for overnight loans moving up a quarter of a point, an increase that in part would likely benefit small savers to the detriment of the stock market.

The move comes just days after Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan met President Clinton and some of his economic aides, a gathering that caused a

furore in the markets as some analysts surmised that the administration was pressuring the Fed against hiking rates.

Some analysts believed the Fed acted quickly after its Feb. 4 move to make certain the markets understood that Fed policy was not being influenced by the administration.

"The Fed hurried to show its independence from the White House," said David Jones of Aubrey G. Lanson and Co.

The quarter-point move, however, was seen by many as part of a process by the Fed aimed at keeping inflationary pressure from building.

"A quarter of a point in isolation is meaningless," said Daiwa Securities' economist Michael Moran, "but it has to be thought of as part of a process."

At the same time, many analysts take the view the Fed is not just being overly cautious or demonstrating its critical independence but sees the real potential for the formation of inflationary pressure as the economy continues to recover.

The U.S. economy grew by an unexpected 7.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of last year,

sending many economists back to their computer models, and it seems to be growing by as much as four per cent in the first three months of this year.

Moreover, the growth pattern is well spread out with strong housing, buoyant manufacturing as factories move closer to their capacity to produce, and upbeat consumers on the move in the nation's shopping malls and car dealerships.

"There is an identifiable risk of inflation here," says Mr. Moran, adding that a year from now "inflation could become a problem without Fed action now."

The administration, which Friday had been rushing about attempting to quiet a Wall Street rumour mill, seemed almost defensive in a statement following the Fed's terse announcement.

"We at (the) Treasury respect the Federal Reserve's independence," the department said, adding, "it is their decision on the sequence of monetary policy actions necessary to promote growth and control inflation."

At the same time, the department statement observed

that the Fed and the administration had the same objectives for the economy — sustainable economic growth and low inflation.

Administration officials, including White House economic advisor Laura Tyson, have taken the view that the present course of inflation is largely benign and not likely to cause problems, and the Treasury statement reinforced this belief.

"Inflation appears to be under control. We see no reason why this should change," the department said.

Many of Capitol Hill agree that the recovery is finally beginning to put people back to work after many years of layoffs under the flag of corporate restructuring.

"I disagree that higher interest rates are needed and believe they will thwart the country's nascent recovery," said House Banking Chairman Henry Gonzalez.

But the Fed is peering further out and the price pressures waiting to happen could be more destructive to the economy than some interest rate moves now, according to analysts.

As city opens for business

Prices in Sarajevo plunge

SARAJEVO (R) — Prices are plunging in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo as a city avid for trade and peace opens for business after nearly two years of siege warfare.

A new pact between the government and Croats who had blocked routes from the coast has led to a surge in supplies that has halved prices for many commodities in the city.

"I'm selling potatoes for 10 Deutschmarks (\$7) a kilogramme that were 20 marks (\$15) just a week ago," said Dzenan Sultanovic, a vendor in the city's central market.

"My onions have dropped from 30 marks (\$20) a kilogramme to just \$10 over the same period. The corridors are opening up and convoys are coming in from the coast. There's a lot more food getting into the city and that's causing the prices to fall."

Sarajevo has been surrounded by Serb soldiers since April 1992, when Bosnia erupted in brutal ethnic warfare.

A six-week ceasefire around the capital has brought fighting to a virtual standstill, but routes in and out are still sealed to most civilian and all commercial traffic.

A "secret" tunnel built under Serb siege lines provides an avenue for goods and people to move into the capital. The tunnel was of limited value in feeding the city so long as Muslim-led government forces were battling Croats who controlled truck routes from the Adriatic coast.

But with Muslims and Croats now back on speaking terms, commerce has resumed in earnest.

Mujic Pulic, 47, sells smoked meat at the central market. One kilogramme costs 60 marks (\$42), half what it was two weeks ago.

"This meat comes through the tunnel from Visoko, north

of the city," he explained. "There was always plenty of meat up there in the countryside, but until we had this agreement with the Croats we couldn't get enough of its past their lines to the tunnel to bring the prices down."

Prices are still high and many of those selling in markets around the city end up bartering their products.

"I just traded 1.5 kilogrammes of potatoes for a litre of cooking oil," said Dzenan Sultanovic. "After I pay seven marks (\$10) for the use of the stall today, the oil is all I will have earned."

Fat profits, if any, are still pocketed by middle men — often warlords — who control the transport and distribution of goods across a war-torn country. Vendors usually make just enough to survive.

But the drop in prices for goods hauled into the city has meant many who peddle home-grown produce have cut prices too.

"When I see sugar going down from 50 marks (\$75) to 30 (\$45) I know it's time for me to lower my prices too," said 65-year old Saima, who sells vegetables from a stall in the central market.

"This is my own stuff that I've grown. I could probably sell it for more, but I can afford to charge less because everything costs me less too. I'm not really in business, I'm just trying to survive," she explained.

Her kale and turnips cost about one-third what they did two weeks ago.

With only the tunnel and a few porous points in the siege lines open for the shipment of goods, market prices in Sarajevo are still subject to sharp fluctuations.

"I'm selling a kilogramme of sugar for 30 marks (\$45) today, but it was down to 20 (\$30) a few days ago," said 30-year-old Rasmira Heldov, who operates

from a tiny stretch of counter-top in the old town's covered market.

"If a single load of coffee or sugar arrives in the city it affects the price immediately. When that's gone, the price goes back up. There's nothing much in reserve here, what you see for sale on the counters for sale everyday is all there is," she added.

Under an agreement be-

tween the Serbs and the Muslims, routes in and out of the city were opened Wednesday, although initially not to commercial traffic.

United Nations officials say this is the first step towards resuming the commercial traffic they hope will make the international community's expensive air and ground relief operations for Sarajevo redundant.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY MARCH 24, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The Void of Course Moon at 12:46 PM squares Pluto stifles emotions, reveals secrets and individuals are uneasy so rid yourself of any burdensome tasks early in the morning plan on a positive afternoon as Mars trines Jupiter.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Attend to important duties early in the day so you'll have more time for social activities later and have an enjoyable evening with your mate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) The time is not right for taking on new responsibilities. Sidestep one who is detrimental to your progress and you will be most successful.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Take steps to patch up any differences with an associate. Study your financial position and make plans to improve it in such a way which will be successful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Contact a wise and older friend for advice you need. You can make an excellent impression on higher-ups now in terms of a new idea in the works.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Important business is best handled early in the day. Analyse your activities and be sure you are a practical as you should be at this time.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Begin the day wisely by

keeping any promises you have made. Go to the right source for the information you need for a new project and be successful.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Try to economise more so you won't be caught in a financial pinch in the future. Steer clear of a group meeting today or there could be trouble.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) An associate can help you solve a difficult problem in the morning. Show increased devotion to loved ones and there will be much appreciation felt.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Positive thinking will help you gain your aims at this time. You can make a fine impression on others now in any endeavour you are involved in.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Put those creative ideas to work now and get excellent results. Avoid one who has an eye on your assets or there could be financial disaster.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Find out what family member desire of you and then do your best to please them. Show others you have wisdom to handle any situation which might come up.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Listen to ideas of a longtime friend and follow through for good benefits. Make as many new contacts as you can and you will be very successful.

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY MARCH 25, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This is a good day to analyse the week so that you can see in the future just how you are going to get the greatest amount of production. Learn to be more satisfied with yourself and co-workers.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study your financial status and make plans to have more security in the future. Find a better way to be more productive at work.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You want to have more abundance in the future but make sure your plans are practical. You should relax at home tonight with your loved ones.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't do anything at this time that could jeopardize your fine reputation. Sidestep one who is detrimental to your progress in a project.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You are tempted to be too extravagant now, so take the right steps to control this situation. Clear up whatever is in error.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Contact a most successful person who can give you good ideas. Avoid the social scene today and concentrate upon business affairs which must be done.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Forget ideas of expansion

right now and take care of problems at hand. Take pains to handle routine tasks in an effective manner.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Make sure to carry through with promises you have made. Keep busy at tasks that could bring you increased income and more prosperity.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Applying yourself with more vigor at this time can result in added income. Don't neglect to pay an important bill which has come and due.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Use your ability to solve a difficult problem. You have excellent judgment now and can easily gain your aims which you desire.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Strive to be more efficient at work and have more rapport with fellow associates. Be more serious and get good results for the effort put in.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study whatever has been puzzling you in the past and come up with the right answers. Your hunches are accurate now for any decision you must make.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be sure not to invest more than you can afford or you could regret it later. Take modern treatments to improve your health and wellbeing.

Western business will be Kazakhstan's main security guarantee

LONDON (AP) — Kazakhstan's main security guarantee will come from business investment, not from the nuclear powers, the country's president said Tuesday.

"I do not think today's world weapons can do anything to protect a country," said President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who is on an official visit to Britain. "Our main security will be a powerful Western business presence in Kazakhstan."

Kazakhstan, which boasts some of the world's largest oil and gas reserves, voted in December to dismantle the 1,400 nuclear warheads it inherited from the former Soviet Union and become a nuclear free state.

Before taking this step, he said, Kazakhstan signed a collective defence agreement with Russia and five other former Soviet republics that are part of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Kazakhstan also signed friendship agreements with China, the United States and Britain that state that in case of aggression against Kazakhstan, all three countries will immediately raise the issue at the United Nations and the 53-member Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, he said.

Mr. Nazarbayev told a news conference that even with these agreements, Western

business holds the key to his country's future success and security.

Kazakhstan has a population of 17 million and has signed 2,000 joint ventures, with 400 already manufacturing products. It has a credit line valued at \$2.5 billion, and \$1.3 billion from donor countries to stabilise its currency and assist its economic reforms, he said.

Kazakhstan was also the first former Soviet republic to sign a major contract with the West. The world's seven biggest oil companies are to invest \$20 billion to develop the Tengiz oil fields — an investment he said will reap profits of \$125 billion in 25 to 40 years.

"I believe these all will comprise our main security guarantee," Mr. Nazarbayev said.

To help promote regional stability, he said, he proposed at the United Nations last year that a security and confidence building conference be held in Asia, a continent with the largest population, rich natural resources, about 70 many hotbeds. He said 27 nations have signed on the preparatory meetings are under way.

One threat to future global stability is the inequality of riches, he said, noting that 80 per cent of the poorest states own only 1.4 per cent of the world's riches.

Mr. Nazarbayev proposed that every state cut its military spending by one per cent,

IMF loan promise gives Russia vote of confidence

MOSCOW (R) — A promise of new cash from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has given Moscow a much-needed vote of confidence in its economic policies, but economists said success depends on pushing ahead with painful reforms.

A memorandum signed after five days of talks between Russian and IMF officials said agreement on granting Russia new loans of \$1.5 billion was very close. Talks could then start on the terms needed to extend another \$4 billion of IMF cash.

"It seems to be a pretty clear stamp of approval," said one economist, "but Western approval of economic policies is a bit of a two-edged sword in this country and I am not sure it will cut much ice with parliament."

Sevodnya newspaper said the money was not enough to solve Russia's economic problems.

The news of IMF assistance, to be used to help Russia's balance of payments, came after the reappearance of rumours of a coup plot against President Boris Yeltsin which have surfaced from time to time over the past two years.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin raced to Mr. Yeltsin's Black Sea holiday retreat on Tuesday to discuss this and budget plans. On his return he firmly quashed the rumours.

But IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus said Mr. Chernomyrdin's trip had held up final discussions with the

IMF.

The IMF memorandum, signed late Tuesday, expressed strong support for Russia's budget plans and efforts to bring inflation under control.

But a news conference to announce the deal was delayed by hours as the two sides hammered out the final details.

"My discussions here have strengthened my basic confidence that Russia will cope, whatever the difficulties, whatever the magnitude of the changes this country faces," Mr. Camdessus told a news conference.

The IMF, which has already offered Russia loans of \$2.5 billion, has been forced to balance a Western desire to back Russian reforms with cash with its own reluctance to pour money into the country unless it showed firm commitment to reforms.

Before the IMF announcement — at the end of a long day of talks — Russian officials had openly doubted whether a new loan would be granted at all.

Western economists worried whether Russia's budget plans were realistic and the IMF said it would only extend the new loan if Russia promised new action to raise extra cash.

Economists said this could include higher taxes on broader tax bands.

But they said the memorandum would amount to little unless the government could force its 1994 budget past a reluctant, conservative parliament.

Thailand explores gas imports from Arab Gulf

ABU DHABI (R) — Thailand is considering long-term agreements to import natural gas from Gulf Arab states as part of a plan to switch from coal at its power stations, an official has said.

Pratin Pathanaporn, deputy governor of policy and planning at Petroleum Authority of Thailand, held talks Wednesday at Abu Dhabi Gas Liquefaction Co. (Adgas), which is expanding its gas sector and will boost exports to its main Asian client, Japan, next month.

Thailand is also considering long-term agreements with Oman and Qatar, he said.

"This year we will be searching and at the end of the year start negotiating," he said in an interview with Reuters at the Middle East gas exports conference.

Industry sources say natural gas is to play an increasing role in the energy mix in the Asia-Pacific region in the year 2000.

"We don't know whether Adgas has any gas for us; the third train is ... for someone else. We might have to wait for further expansion," he said.

Mr. Pathanaporn was referring to Adgas's expansion of its Das island gas facility which will be completed in April.

Peter Carr, Adgas general manager, told the conference Tuesday it will double LNG exports to five million tonnes a year over the next 25 years to Japan's Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO).

Savit Bothiwihok, Thailand's minister charged with national energy policy, held talks with Adgas last October on details of its TEPCO agreement.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris

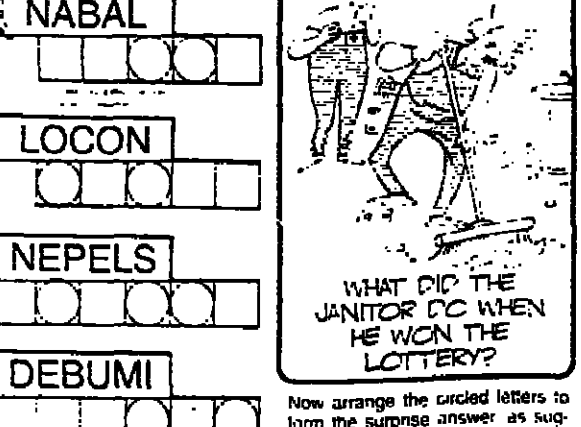


"I dreamed they made a movie about my parents: 'Honey, I Screwed Up the Kid!'"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argentin



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer as suggested by the above cartoon

Answer here: HE

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles GUMBO APPLY GADFLY BOUGHT

Answer What the students studied at the mall — "BUY" OLOGY

Peanuts



Andy Capp

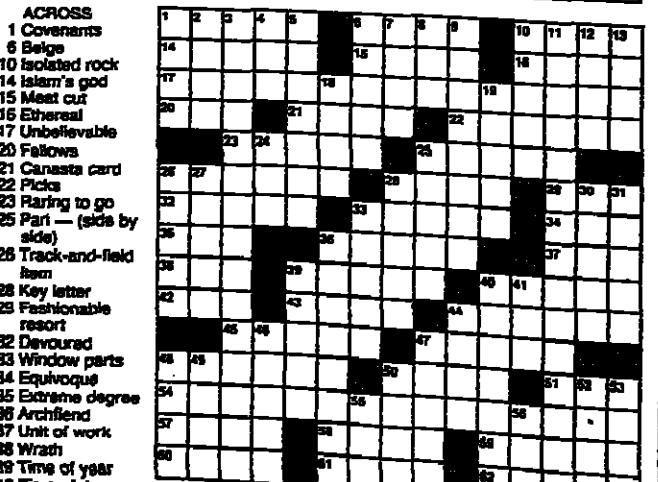


Mutt'n'Jeff

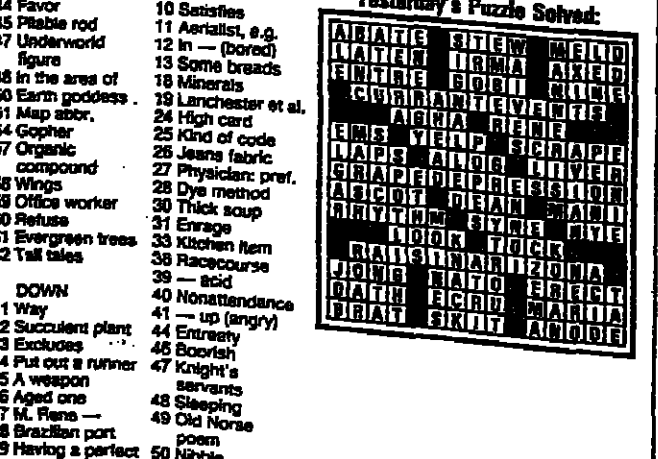


THE Daily Crossword

by James Barrick



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S. Korean forces put on alert; North slams Patriot deployment

SEOUL (R) — South Korea put its 650,000-strong armed forces on special alert Wednesday as the North warned that U.S. deployment of anti-missile batteries in the South would push the peninsula to the brink of war.

Tensions have mounted rapidly in recent days, with North Korea responding dramatically to rising Western pressure on the isolated Stalinist state to prove it is not developing nuclear weapons.

In another move likely to inflame the situation, South Korea confirmed Wednesday that this year's Team Spirit joint military exercises with U.S. forces would go ahead, perhaps as early as next month, and would involve the Patriot missiles.

Seoul and Washington had suspended Team Spirit on condition North Korea allowed full inspections of its nuclear facilities, but the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says it was barred from making full inspections of a facility.

South Korea's joint chiefs of staff issued the alert order as a precaution against North Korea provoking an armed conflict while President Kim Young-Sam was abroad, a Defence Ministry spokesman said.

Mr. Kim was to leave Thursday for a week-long trip to Japan and China to seek their cooperation in last-ditch diplomatic efforts to end the crisis over North Korea's sus-

pected nuclear arms programme.

A terse statement issued by the (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) Wednesday called the U.S. decision to deploy Patriot missiles in key sites around Seoul "a provocative step to drive the situation into extremes by screwing up the tensions on the Korean peninsula."

"Clinton's order... is a grave threat to the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) and it clearly shows that the United States is pushing the situation of the Korean peninsula to the brink of war," the official said in a report monitored in Tokyo.

KCNA said the revival of Team Spirit posed a threat to North Korea. "As we have declared time and again, we are fully prepared to answer dialogue with dialogue and war with war. We do not like an empty talk," it quoted official daily Rodong Sinmun as saying.

Few analysts in Seoul believe North Korea's bellicosity amounts to a genuine threat to launch a military attack on South Korea, but they say it is best to be prepared.

KCNA and other state media in Pyongyang often use apocalyptic language to describe the situation on the peninsula, which has remained in a state of tense armed truce since the 1950-53 Korean War.

Defence Minister Rhee Byoung-Tae told parliament Wednesday there were no un-

usual North Korean troop movements this week along the heavily fortified border between the Koreas.

"At present, I don't see any signs of North Korean military provocation in the near future but I can't rule out the possibility of future provocation if the United Nations moves ahead to talk of sanctions," Mr. Rhee said.

"The Defence Ministry is now fully prepared to deal with any contingencies."

Mr. Rhee said Patriot missiles, to be shipped from the United States, would be involved in Team Spirit, which might begin in late April or in mid-May or "sometime after that." The date would be decided after Mr. Kim returned to Seoul.

"One Patriot battalion can fight at 55 incoming aircraft simultaneously and has the capability of intercepting Scud missiles," he said.

He said resumption of the exercise had become inevitable because the North failed to meet two preconditions: Accepting full nuclear inspections and exchanging special envoys with the South.

South Korea and the United States had demanded full inspections so the IAEA could determine if North Korea was developing nuclear weapons. The IAEA has now referred the dispute to the U.N. Security Council.

Pyeongyang's envoy in Beijing said Wednesday that North Korea was confident of China's

support in its row over inspections.

China, one of the five Security Council members with veto power, has urged patience with North Korea.

Meanwhile, a leading British military journal said Tuesday North Korea appears to have obtained enough plutonium to make up to two nuclear weapons.

In a special report Jane's Intelligence Review said foreign estimates of how much plutonium the country now had ranged as high as 40 kilograms, with this possibly rising up to 3,000 kilograms by the year 2000.

"One or even two nuclear devices could, therefore, already be in the hands of (North Korea)," it said. Such a device may weigh at least 500 kilograms and could easily be carried up to 300 kilometres by a type of Scud missile that North Korea has, said the report which was made available ahead of publication Wednesday.

U.S. officials said Monday their intelligence services were convinced North Korea had reprocessed enough material to build at least one nuclear bomb.

Jane's Intelligence Review said some experts believed that a North Korean plutonium separation plant at Yongbyon, north of the capital Pyongyang, could produce enough fuel for 10 nuclear warheads per year once it was operational.

Airbus crashes in Siberia; 75 die

MOSCOW (R) — A half-empty Russian Airbus crashed in the snow-bound depths of Siberia early Wednesday and all 75 people on board were believed killed, officials said.

A rescue team which reached the scene by helicopter and on skis found blazing wreckage but no sign of any survivors, a spokesman for the Emergency Situations Ministry in Moscow said.

The plane, on a flight from Moscow to Hong Kong, was listed as carrying 12 crew and 63 passengers. The passengers included 17 Chinese, four Britons and an Indian.

The Airbus A310, leased by the Russian airline Aeroflot, came down in mountainous country near Novokuznetsk, 3,750 kilometres east of Moscow.

It was the second aviation disaster in Siberia this year. More than 120 people were killed on Jan. 3 when an Aeroflot Tupolev-154 plunged into farmland near Irkutsk.

Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu interrupted a tour of the Urals and was heading for the scene of the disaster, the official ITAR-TASS news agency said.

There was no immediate clue as to the cause. The A310, made by a West European consortium, was carrying only 75 people, well short of the 185 passengers it can take in the configuration used by Aeroflot.

TASS said the three pilots, Andrei Danilov, Yaroslav Kudrinsky and Igor Piskarev, were all experienced with 850-900 hours flying time each and knew the Airbus well.

The ministry spokesman said deep snow made the crash site difficult to reach. The rescue team said it could be impossible to locate all the wreckage.

The plane came down at 1:30 a.m. after losing contact with air traffic controllers, TASS said. It crashed near the town of Mezhdurechensk, 75

kilometres east of Novokuznetsk, a major Siberian industrial centre.

The ministry spokesman said rescue workers from Novokuznetsk, Mezhdurechensk and the mining city of Kemerovo were at the scene of the crash within hours.

Officials said a special commission had been set up to investigate the cause of the crash, which seemed certain to raise renewed fears about air safety in Russia in the current turbulent economic situation.

Aeroflot has strenuously defended its safety record despite a series of recent crashes of local and international flights. "The situation in Russia corresponds to all safety standards," Transport Minister Vitaly Yefimov said after the January disaster.

Mr. Yefimov said that according to the International Civil Aviation Organisation the accident rate in Russia in 1992 was equal to that in the United States.

Dudley Moore accused of beating girlfriend

LOS ANGELES (R) — British comic actor Dudley Moore, who was nominated for an Oscar for the 1981 film *Arthur*, was arrested after his girlfriend accused him of beating her in a domestic dispute, police said Tuesday.

Moore, 58, was taken into custody late Monday, booked on suspicion of domestic violence and was jailed overnight until he was released early Tuesday morning on \$50,000 bail, police spokeswoman Lorrie Taylor said.

Prosecutors will now decide whether to charge him formally with cohabitation abuse, a felony that carries a maximum penalty of four years in prison and up to \$6,000 in fines, Ms. Taylor said. The incident began when Moore, best known for his comic roles in the films *10* and *Arthur* called police to report a domestic dispute at his home in the Los Angeles suburb of Venice, according to a police statement. A short time later, Moore's girlfriend called to say "he had just battered her," officials said.

Officers were sent to investigate and found that the couple had fought, with the woman suffering minor injuries described as "visible trauma to the neck area." "The injuries sustained and the personal relationship between Mr. Moore and the woman left officers no alternative but to arrest Mr. Moore," the statement said. Moore's publicist, Michelle Bega, declined comment, saying she had not yet been able to reach him. Police declined to identify Moore's girlfriend, saying they were barred from releasing the names of possible crime victims.

Moore, who has been married three times, was last seen in public in 1992 when he was in Venice, according to a police statement. A short time later, Moore's girlfriend called to say "he had just battered her," officials said.

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British Maritime Museum to host

LONDON (R) — Britain's National Maritime Museum, denying charges of grave-digging, said Tuesday it would host a controversial show of artefacts retrieved from the sunken hulk of the Titanic.

Some 1,513 passengers of the "unsinkable" Royal Mail Ship Titanic drowned when the British ocean liner struck an iceberg on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England, to New York on April 15, 1912. Nearly 3,000 objects, including children's marbles, cut glass vases, paper traveller's cheques, dictionaries, gold chains, shaving brushes, keys, dinner plates and pipes have been brought to the surface since salvage work began in 1987. "The story of the Titanic is one of history's most famous human dramas which has captured the imagination of millions of people worldwide," said Admiral Lord Lewin, chairman of the National Maritime Museum's trustees. The first full exhibition of Titanic objects will open at the museum at Greenwich, on the River Thames east of London, on Oct. 4. The museum's decision to kick off the worldwide show is the result of an agonising ethical debate and has drawn criticism from survivors and maritime archaeologists.

"I object to the whole thing, lock, stock and barrel," said survivor Eva Hart, 89, who was seven years old when she lost her father in the world's most sensational maritime disaster. "I do not think one should go down and rob people's graves." If it stopped to think about it I'd feel very unhappy about the whole thing," said another survivor, 82-year-old Milvina Dean, nine months old when her father died in the catastrophe.

"I said that if the timetable of deliveries was not respected — and that goes for both sides — we of course will re-examine that timetable," he said. "And that is what we are doing now."

Under an accord signed in January by the presidents of Ukraine, Russia and the United States, Moscow is to supply \$1 billion in nuclear fuel to Kiev in exchange for Ukraine giving up 1,600 former Soviet warheads on its soil.

Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Valery Shmarov said Monday, the first day of talks, that Moscow had not provided any nuclear fuel in response to 60 warheads shipped from Ukraine to Russia in the past two weeks aboard two trains.

Russia announced earlier this month that it supplied fuel to Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear power station but Kiev officials said that shipment was made under an earlier agreement rather than the landmark January accord.

"I believe this problem will be solved in a week to 10 days," Mr. Perry said without elaborating when asked to comment on the dispute.

Mr. Perry said he hoped any dispute over the accord between Russia and Ukraine could be resolved within 10 days.

He also said Washington was willing to act as an intermediary between Russia and Ukraine on another dispute — ownership of the 300-warship Black Sea Fleet.

Gen. Radetsky was asked at a joint news conference with Mr. Perry about reports that Russia had not supplied fuel to Ukrainian nuclear power stations as promised in exchange for Ukraine's first shipments of warheads.

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Residents of this mainly Muslim northern Bosnian town of Maglaj walk past destroyed houses, a day after Bosnian Serbs lifted a nine-month siege (AFP photo)

Sarajevo bridge opens to civilians

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — To the joy of hundreds of bystanders, a bridge linking Serb and government-held districts of central Sarajevo opened Wednesday for the first time in two years.

Cheers and claps erupted from a crowd on the government side as two long-time friends, a Muslim woman and a Serb man, crossed to Serb-held territory.

Sahija Corovic, 55, a Muslim, was to visit a sister she hadn't seen since the bridge collapsed. Veroljub Milovanovic, 66, a Serb, went to see old friends.

Minutes later Borislav Cus, 68, was the first person crossing the 30-metre (90-foot) long bridge over the shallow Miljacka River from the Serb side.

Bullet-scarred traffic lights and signs testified to the fighting that had made the bridge unusable. A U.N.-brokered ceasefire on Feb. 10 has reduced hostilities in Sarajevo to occasional small arms fire and led to talks that enabled the bridge to open.

A total of 41 people, including two children, crossed the bridge. They were carefully watched by U.N. peacekeepers at sandbagged checkpoints and Serb and Muslim fighters lurking in shell-pocked buildings at either side of the bridge.

Hard-to-get permits are needed from authorities on each side to cross. Both are believed reluctant to let anyone of fighting age use the bridge.

About 200 people on the government side applied for permission, said Col. Richard Pernod of the French U.N. peacekeeping force. On the Serb side, 30 applied to cross, he said.

Also Wednesday, an aid convoy threaded through Serb-held territory to the northern city of Maglaj, which had not seen a land convoy in five months until last Sunday.

Bosnian Serb forces have removed a number of heavy weapons from inside a NATO exclusion zone around Sarajevo, the United Nations said Wednesday.

Military spokesman Simon MacDowall told a news conference the weapons, whose presence had prompted a stand-off between the U.N. and the

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House follows Senate, votes for Whitewater probe

WASHINGTON (R) — The House of Representatives followed the Senate in voting for hearings on the Whitewater affair, leaving it up to leaders of the two parties to work out how and when.

Democratic leaders pledged a good-faith effort to get an agreement but gave Republicans no guarantees that hearings would actually take place.

A non-binding resolution calling for hearings, approved by a House vote of 408-15, stated that they should be "structured and sequenced" in a way that in the leaders' judgment would not interfere with the investigation being conducted by special counsel Robert Fiske.

The resolution specifies that witnesses will not be offered immunity from prosecution resulting from their testimony if Mr. Fiske objects.

Such immunity granted at congressional hearings into the Iran-contra scandal of Ronald Reagan's administration resulted in convictions obtained by the special counsel in that case being overturned on appeal.

The House vote came as Mr. Fiske announced in Little Rock, Arkansas, that former Judge David Hale had pleaded guilty to two counts of conspiracy and mail fraud in a plea bargain under which he is to testify before a federal grand jury probing Whitewater.

In Washington, Roger Altman, a deputy treasury secretary who was in charge of cleaning up the savings and loan mess, testified for two and a half hours Tuesday before another grand jury.

"I had an opportunity to provide all the facts and information to Mr. Fiske's investigation, and I am prepared to do the same to any congressional investigation," Mr. Altman said as he left the courtroom.

Mr. Altman had been expected to be questioned about meetings with White House officials to give them updates on the handling of the bankruptcy of Madison Guaranty Savings Loan of Arkansas.

Madison Guaranty was owned by James McDougal and his wife, who were business partners with president and Hillary Rodham Clinton in their money-losing Whitewater land investment.

During a brief House debate on the resolution and in comments to reporters, House Speaker Thomas Foley of Washington and Democratic leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri emphasised that their commitment was only to seek a way to hold hearings.

South African homeland leader ousted by police

BISHO, South Africa (R) — Cheering police rebels waving guns led former military dictator Oupa Gqozo to a stadium in Bisho to address soldiers and police Wednesday as confusion reigned in Ciskei homeland.

Brigadier Gqozo, who seized power in a bloodless coup in March 1990, resigned Tuesday and called on Pretoria for help after an apparent rebellion by police and troops in the nominally-independent South African homeland.

He told state television early Wednesday he had quit and sought Pretoria's help to prevent anarchy and bloodshed in the 7,700 square kilometres east coast territory.

Brig. Gqozo, 42, travelled in an armoured truck with darkened windows to the stadium Wednesday morning. It was not clear whether he had been put under arrest by the rebels.

Armed men at the Ciskei Police College in the capital earlier told Reuters 30 senior security force officers were being held hostage in the college.

The captives included Police Commissioner General Mnyawo Nqoyi, who was hauled before cheering underlings Tuesday night.

The security forces want Brig. Gqozo to guarantee their pensions and pay after Ciskei and nine other apartheid-created homelands are reincorporated into South Africa after the first all-race elections on April 26-28.

"I did not want him to resign because if he resigns it will not be easy for us to get our money," a rifleman at Independence Stadium told reporters as he waited for Brig. Gqozo to arrive.

Similar demands by civil servants toppled Bophuthatswana's autocratic leader Lucas Mangope nearly two weeks ago.

Pretoria's ambassador to Ciskei Pieter Goosen told Reuters at dawn Wednesday that South African police were on standby in the border town of

King William's town, but that no security forces had entered Ciskei.

He said no one was in charge of Ciskei following Brig. Gqozo's resignation.

But he added he expected a delegation of South Africa's multi-party Transitional Executive Council (TEC) in the area Wednesday to decide on Ciskei's future.

"I have not been approached formally to take over. If I am, I will do the best I can. But the situation is complex," he said in a telephone interview.

A South African Defence Force spokesman said troops were standing by but would only be deployed in the homeland on the orders of the TEC.

Meanwhile, the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the black guerrilla Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) met for the first time on South African soil Wednesday to discuss an end to hostilities.

The government and police have blamed APLA guerrillas for the radical black Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), of a number of attacks on the security forces and whites.

Tobias Gola, the PAC's deputy secretary-general, said the meeting, due to last two or three days at a conference centre in Pretoria's eastern outskirts, was expected to cover "everything."

"It deals with all issues in relation to the future situation, the integration and the amnesty for APLA members. They will talk about the new army," he said.

"There must be agreement on all issues. We need peace in this country," he added. SADF spokesman Nick Sendall described the talks — with about eight people on each side — as "very exploratory."

They were about "what we do. What they do. And what we both look like. They would attempt to find common ground for further talks. Mr. Sendall added.

'Dublin sees IRA truce'

DUBLIN (R) — The Irish government thinks the Irish Republican Army (IRA) will declare a temporary ceasefire in its 25-year war with Britain within weeks, the Irish Times reported Wednesday.

The newspaper said it had learned that the IRA hoped that the truce would allow its political wing, Sinn Fein, to join a forum to debate a peace process for Northern Ireland which the Dublin government plans to establish.

There was no immediate government comment on the report, which follows suggestions that the IRA has been

IRA ends its war against British rule in Northern Ireland and Sinn Fein renounces violence.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, Britain's Northern Ireland secretary, said this week that only a complete end to IRA violence would entitle Sinn Fein to come in from the cold and be treated by London as an equal with other political parties.

Republican sources in Ireland and the British-ruled province say the IRA activists have for weeks been debating a temporary halt to their war on Britain instead of the full end to hostilities which the Anglo-

Irish peace plan.

Such a move would anger Britain, which has refused any talks with Sinn Fein until the

Kazakh president calls for changes to CIS

LONDON (R) — Kazakhstan's president has called for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) — successor to the Soviet Union — to be changed into a smaller grouping that would exclude countries involved in military conflicts.

In a speech to Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs, President Nursultan Nazarbayev said the new grouping would aim to ensure a "belt of stability" in its area. He suggested the name "Euro-Asiatic union."

The present CIS, formed after the Soviet Union collapsed at the end of 1991, has 12 members — all the former Soviet republics except the three Baltic states.

Mr. Nazarbayev, who is on an official visit to Britain, said the CIS had defied predictions that it would quickly disintegrate and could have bright prospects for economic integration. But he said the time had come to reform it.

At Ukraine's invitation, Mr. Perry flew to this base in fertile fields and walked to the edge of an open concrete silo containing a 30-metre (100-foot) SS-24 intercontinental missile from which 10 warheads had recently been removed.

"This is an historic moment. This has been a fine confidence-building measure," he told Ukrainian Defence Minister Vitaly Radetsky, who had urged Mr. Perry to examine at first hand the former Soviet republic's efforts to become a non-nuclear state.

Mr. Perry, 66, later told reporters at a news conference in Kiev that he was struck deeply by the tour, which included observation of two Ukrainian missile launch officers practising at an underground bunker.

"As I stood there watching this process, I admit that I was awed. These two operators can control almost 800 warheads — the power to destroy almost every major city in the United States from this one control centre," he said.

Mr. Perry, noting the end of a long U.S. military ties with former Soviet republics, was assured by Mr. Radetsky that work to deactivate Ukraine's 46 SS-24

130 six-warhead SS-19s was proceeding well although the financial cost was high and Ukraine needed more aid.

"Thirty of the SS-24s are already deactivated," the minister told Mr. Perry. "Some people say this is not true. But I assure you we are ready to open any hatch here. We would bet you on this one. And if there is a warhead there, we will pay you," he laughed.

Ukraine inherited some 1,600 warheads when the Soviet Union broke apart, but recently shipped 120 of them back to Russia in two trains as part of its promise to get rid of all missiles.

Mr. Perry and Gen. Radetsky stood side-by-side at the edge of the silo, its giant green steel door looming over them, and looked down at wiring and funnels bared on the three-metre-wide (10-foot) missile by the absence of warheads.

"We are showing you the inside of the silo so you can see that what we tell you is true and to help resolve our problems of housing, social security and retraining for all the officers and military personnel who have retired," Gen. Radetsky told Mr. Perry.

"I understand fully. You are a very good teacher," said Mr. Perry.

Mr. Perry noted at the news conference that the United States had already committed itself to help Ukraine's nuclear assem-

al, provide housing for former troops and convert the military industry to commercial production.

But Ukrainian officials told reporters at the base that it would cost \$2.8 billion to complete the job of destroying the missiles, cleaning up the silos, restoring the land and helping displaced military personnel.

After flying to Pervomaik with reporters aboard Gen. Radetsky's plane, Mr. Perry was taken to Dnipropetrovsk, where he visited a plant that once made SS-24s and SS-19s. It has recently been converted to produce trolleybuses and farm equipment.

Officials at the plant asked Mr. Perry to back their efforts to change the plant from military to commercial rocket production with the help of U.S

Stojko leads, Urmanov 4th at figure skating tourney

CHIBA, Japan (R) — Elvis Stojko of Canada snatched the lead after the men's technical programme at the world figure skating championships Wednesday with Olympic champion Alexei Urmanov managing only fourth place.

The Canadian Olympic silver medalist, 22 on Tuesday, put together a virtually perfect programme, including the best triple axel of the day to move in front of Frenchman Philippe Candeloro of France, the Olympic bronze medalist.

But Russian Urmanov, whose form has been patchy all week, continued to struggle in vain with his jumps, adding an unwanted spin to the end of his triple axel to spoil his combination jump, then landing off balance on a triple lutz.

He finished behind Ukrainian Viacheslav Zagorodniuk, the European silver medalist

who did not compete at last month's Olympics in Norway. The technical programme counts for one-third of the marks and if Urmanov is to add the world title to his Olympic gold he will have to win Thursday's free programme and hope that another skater also beats Stojko.

Stojko's programme earned him several 5.88 and a 5.9 for technique and, more significantly for him, one 5.9 among a rash of 5.8s for artistry.

"This year has been a climb up the stairs, step by step, with some improvement every step of the way," the Canadian said.

"Sometimes when you are doing a good programme you don't realise what you've done. It just flows out of you. Before I knew it, this one was over," Stojko said.



Princess Haya chosen Jordan's 1993 best sports personality

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein has been chosen by a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) poll as Jordan's best sports personality of 1993, according to a recent announcement. Princess Haya, who is member of the national equestrian team, was voted the best sports personality by BBC listeners in Jordan. Algerian runners Noureddine Morceli and Hassiba Boulmerka have been voted the BBC

Arab sports personalities of the year by listeners in the region. Athletics dominated the voting. Long distance runners Khaled Skah of Morocco and Qatari Mohammed Saleman took the runner up positions in the men's category behind Morocco while runners Nazhat Bedwan of Morocco and Ghada Sha'aa of Syria were in second and third place respectively in the women's category.

Okifax rally sets off today

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Competitors and officials are already well prepared and anxiously await the start of the Okifax National Rally — the first of the season's 10 scheduled auto sports events — which will set off from the Royal Automobile club of Jordan (RACJ) Thursday afternoon.

The Kingdom's most avid competitors, including 1993 champion Amjad Farrah, runner-up Tareq Tabaa and third placed Ahmad Al Daoud will be taking part in addition to over 20 other crews including veteran Isa Halabi.

The route of the 341-kilometre rally will provide an excellent chance for competitors, marshalls and officials to practice for the first leg of the Jordan International Rally scheduled for May 12-13.

The entire route, including 100 kilometres of 12 special stages will be over asphalted roads in the north of the country. The event is also open for cars that are no longer in accordance with the latest specifications autho-

risied by the International Automobile Federation (FIA). However, RACJ has announced that the older rally cars, while being allowed to compete, will not score points for the Jordan drivers or co-drivers championships for 1994 as this is reserved of homologated cars only.

The rally will begin at 5 p.m. heading towards the two longest special stages at Marsa' and Masarra just past Shafa Badran and the village of Alook.

Competitors will then head to the 4.96-kilometre river stage, a new addition to the rally near the King Talal Dam, while Ras Al Aqra will be the fourth stage just past Jazzaza and Majdal.

Another new special stage, Sakhina, will test the skill and preparations of the competing crews just before passing through the scenic and forested areas of Anjara and Ajloun.

Kufr Khal will be the last special stage of the first leg before regrouping at the Jerash Resthouse.

The second leg of the night rally will take competitors back to the river, Ras Al Aqra, Sakhina, Kufr Khal,

and Marsa' stages before heading to the last special stage of 10.85 kilometres at Rumeimin.

The first car is expected to finish back at RACJ at 2 a.m. Friday. Preliminary results will appear early Friday morning.

Officials at RACJ headquarters put the finishing touches on the final details of the rally just before it set off. According to Chief Marshall Bashir Asfour, crews from the Sports Medicine Federation and the Military Sports Federation were briefed and trained to handle timing and safety at Rumeimin and Masarra stages.

"I expect it will be quite a competitive rally. There are two new tough special stages, and it will be a good rehearsal for the upcoming international rally," Asfour told the Jordan Times.

RACJ's next event will be the Al Mustaqbal Club charity rallytour April 8. The most prestigious event is the international rally sponsored by Camel. The season will also include two other national rallies, three rallytours, a speedtest and the popular Rumman Hill Climb.

Martinez advances in Houston

HOUSTON (AP) — Conchita Martinez, who seems to play her best in this tournament, beat Helen Klesi of Canada 6-3, 6-2 Tuesday in the second round of the \$400,000 Virginia Slims of Houston.

Martinez, the defending champion and top seed, recorded four aces and won 69 per cent of her first-serve points. The Spaniard is unbeaten in five career matches in the Houston tournament

and has not lost a set at stadium court.

In first-round play, Veronika Martine of Germany topped Dominique Monami of Belgium 6-2, 6-3; Argentina's Bettina Fulco-Villella beat Italy's Laura Golarsa 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; Wilfrud Probst of Germany defeated Caroline Kuhlman of the United States, 6-3, 6-4; and Sandra Cacic of the United States stopped Spain's Virginia Ruano-Pascal 7-5, 6-0.

Argentine coach Basile to persist with Maradona

RECIFE, Brazil (R) — Argentine coach Alfio Basile, short of creative talent for his team, said Tuesday he would persist with efforts to get Diego Maradona fit enough to play in the 1994 World Cup finals.

Basile said he preferred Maradona to remain without a club and that he was also hoping to have striker Claudio Caniggia in his World Cup squad.

Caniggia is still serving a 15-month worldwide ban for drug abuse but Basile said he would be allowed to start training with the Argentine squad as soon as the suspension finishes.

"We are following Caniggia's progress and when the ban ends in April he can join us," Basile told a news conference.

Referring to Maradona, he commented: "It is better that he doesn't have a club. Then he doesn't have to suffer the pressure of playing two or three games a week and of being dragged off to play friendlies to earn (his club) money."

"The best club for him is the Argentine national team where he can continue his recovery and get fit in peace."

He added: "We are not trying to put pressure on the other players. A fit Maradona will help everyone."

Many commentators have doubted whether the 33-year-old Maradona, sacked by Argentina's Newell's Old Boys last month, can get into shape without playing regular club soccer.

Basile named Maradona in his squad for Wednesday's friendly away to Brazil in Recife. But team sources said Tuesday the midfielder was still not fit enough to play.

Maradona did not travel with the squad and was due to arrive later Tuesday.

Newell's Old Boys sacked Maradona less than six months after he had begun his latest comeback with them.

He has previously been sacked by Spanish club Seville and before that had served an 18-month worldwide ban for drug abuse.

In another fiery incident last month he fired an air gun at reporters waiting outside his mansion.

Basile desperately needs both players' flair. Without them Argentina struggled to qualify for the World Cup finals.

Knicks smother Bulls

NEW YORK (R) — The New York Knicks used smothering defence to extend their season-high winning streak to 10 games with a 87-78 victory over the Chicago Bulls Tuesday.

Hubert Davis scored 24 points to pace the Knicks, who have held 10 of their last 11 opponents to under 90 points.

The Knicks opened the third quarter with a 12-2 run to take the lead for good.

The Knicks sealed the win with a 7-0 run late in the fourth, capped by Davis's third three-pointer of the night. The bucket gave the Knicks an 83-74 lead — their largest of the night.

At Cleveland, the Cavaliers set a team-record for fewest points allowed by holding Indiana to a franchise-record low in a 93-61 pounding of the Pacers.

Terrell Brandon had 15 points, to lead six Cavaliers in double figures. Gerald Wilkins, Chris Mills, and Danny Ferry each had 13 points for the Cavs.

In Phoenix, A.C. Green scored seven of his 19 points in overtime to lift the Suns to a 124-118 win over the Miami Heat.

Kevin Johnson had 35 points and 11 assists for the Suns.

Oliver Miller had 16 points and 17 rebounds and Charles Barkley had 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Suns, who are 14-0 all-time against the Heat.

A basket by Miami's Glen Rice with 3:01 left in overtime tied the game for the last time at 116-116. Green, who also had 19 boards, followed with a three-point play and added two free throws 39 seconds later to give Phoenix a 121-116 edge.

At Golden State, Billy Owens' put-back capped a furious comeback as the Warriors edged the Magic 117-116.

The Warriors scored the final four points of the game to close a 14-2 game-ending run. Owen's bucket completed Golden State's thrilling comeback from a 114-103 deficit.

In Seattle, Sam Perkins scored 27 points and hit six three-pointers as the SuperSonics trounced the San Antonio Spurs 105-89.

It was Seattle's third win over San Antonio in as many meetings.

In Charlotte, Alonzo Mourning scored 12 of his 34 points in the third quarter to lead the Hornets to a 125-91 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers.

At Minnesota, Chris Smith put in a rebound of his missed driving layup with five seconds left to give the Timberwolves an 83-81 victory over Houston, ending the Rockets five-game winning streak.

At New Jersey, Kenny Anderson and Derrick Coleman scored 25 points apiece to power the Nets to a 105-102 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

In Denver, Reggie Williams and Laphonso Ellis scored six points each during a 20-5 third-quarter run that lifted the Nuggets to a 108-94 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

The Sacramento Kings were the only home team to lose Tuesday after Clyde Drexler's running jumper with one second left lifted the Portland Trail Blazers to a 96-94 victory.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TAMMAM HIRSH
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THAT EXTRA CHANCE

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ K 4 3
♥ A K J 10 6 5
♦ K 4
♣ K 6

EAST
♠ 7 6
♥ 8 7 4
♦ 9 8 7
♣ J 9 8

SOUTH
♠ A J 10 9 8
♥ 9 8
♦ A Q J
♣ A Q 2

The bidding:
South: West North East
1♠ Pass 2♥ Pass
3NT Pass 4♠ Pass
4♥ Pass 4NT Pass
5♠ Pass 7NT Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♣
Cover the East-West hands and assume you are declaring seven no trump. How would you go about it? North might have jump shifted to three hearts, but elected to keep the bidding low in case room was needed to probe for the best spot. When South showed a good hand, North vainly tried to elicit a heart preference from partner. When that was

not forthcoming, Blackwood revealed that all the aces were present and North bounced into the no-trump grand slam.

After a safe diamond lead, declarer could count ten fast winners. The other three could come from a winning finesse in either major. Which would you choose?

It is no improvement to cash one high heart before taking a finesse in that suit. If you are going to commit to the heart finesse, it is correct to take it immediately, so you can repeat the finesse successfully to protect against a 4-1 break.

You are on the right track if you have decided to cash the ace-king in one major and, if the queen does not drop, take the finesse in the other. Does it make any difference which major you choose to finesse?

Go to the top of the class if you choose to cash the high hearts, rather than spades, where you hold the same number of cards, but more flexibility to manipulate your assets. If the heart queen drops, that's that. If not, next cash the king of spades to guard against a singleton queen, then take the finesse. That still enables you to bring in the suit, if East holds four spades headed by the queen.

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A taxpayer service specialist from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service will be at the American Embassy in Amman on March 30 to April 7 to assist U.S. taxpayers.

A special tax seminar will be conducted on Thursday March 31, and Sunday April 3, at 8:30 a.m. in the United States Information Service auditorium at the embassy. Anyone who is interested will be welcome to attend. No reservation is necessary.

Individual assistance will be provided by appointment on April 4 to 6. Each taxpayer is advised to have a copy of his or her last filed return and to have all papers well organized and scheduled to the extent possible when appearing for an appointment. Appointments may be made by calling 820-101, extension 2062.

Income tax forms and information booklets are now available in the consular section of the embassy.

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Yarmouk University in: Antigone

at 7pm on the 24th of March

Nadera Omran in: Kawalees

at 7pm on the 27th and the 28th of March

Ahliya school in: A Midsummer Night's Dream

at 6pm 29th and 30th of March

In cooperation with the National Music Conservatory
a lecture on Music & Theater by Mr Kifah Fakhouri
at 6pm on Sat the 26th of March

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in the lobby

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	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
TODAY	INDECENT PROPOSAL Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Fifi Abdo/Hisham A. in QADARA Arabic Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD '1' DEMOLITION MAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' ACCIDENTAL HERO Shows: 12:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:15	Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden X Forbidden	Watch for the surprise — The next play....	Since the actors are abroad the theatre is closed It will re-open on April 6, 1994 for two weeks in the last performances of: "Arab Summit Conference"

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sudan, rebels agree to free aid access

NAIROBI (R) — Sudan's government and rebels agreed on Wednesday to allow relief aid to move freely by road, water and air to southern Sudan battered by nearly 11 years of civil war. In an agreement signed at the Foreign Ministry in Nairobi after three days of peace talks, the Sudanese government and two rebel delegations said they also agreed to the principle of aid delivery to all needy people regardless of their location. "It's fantastic," said Philip O'Brien, the head of Operation Lifeline Sudan, the umbrella organisation providing aid to the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by fighting in the south. Aid workers said if the parties to the conflict in the south allowed the free movement of aid into the south by road from Uganda and Kenya then it would make a substantial difference as agencies could stop the costly delivery of food by aircraft.

Hrawi signs death penalty law

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese President Elias Hrawi signed a law introducing the death penalty for politically-motivated killings and making it mandatory for pre-meditated murder. Parliament rushed through the law on March 10 after the February 27 bombing of a Maronite church which killed 11 worshippers and injured nearly 60. The law closes legal loopholes that allowed judges to avoid imposing capital punishment for murder since 1982. It is part of a crackdown on violent crime that has been rampant since the 1975-90 civil war. The new law, signed by Mr. Hrawi late on Tuesday, will not be retroactive. It will take effect after publication in the state gazette.

Arafat rejects British aid to police

TUNIS (AP) — Yasser Arafat has rejected as "too little and too late" British offers to help set up a Palestinian police force in the West Bank town of Jericho and the Gaza Strip, sources said Wednesday. Britain offered to train and equip 200 Palestinian police and provide specialised training by Scotland Yard on criminal investigation and anti-terrorism, according to the sources. Mr. Arafat, who expected more, instructed Nasir Yousef, whom he has appointed to coordinate the creation of the police force, to turn down the offer, according to the sources. Donor countries will be meeting Thursday in Cairo to decide on a package of assistance required for the police force (see page 2).

Ashrawi seeks bigger EU role in Mideast

BRUSSELS (R) — Prominent Palestinian Hanan Ashrawi said on Tuesday the European Union (EU) should play a bigger role in the Middle East peace process. Dr. Ashrawi, who articulated Palestinian longing for independence as spokeswoman for Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for two years, met Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes on a visit to Belgium. She said she discussed with Mr. Claes the question of the EU taking "a more direct political role in the peace process" and contributing to an international force in the occupied territories to protect Palestinians after last month's Hebron massacre. Dr. Ashrawi said her "very good" meeting with Mr. Claes covered human rights in the occupied territories and giving substance and direction to any resumption of peace talks. She hoped the EU could play a more effective role "in terms of conditions on the ground and what is required to put the peace process on track and respond to the real needs of Palestinian people."

Arafat welcomes papal endeavours

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat welcomed the visit of a Vatican envoy, and the meeting could help push forward Mideast peace talks, the papal spokesman said Tuesday. Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran returned Tuesday from a visit to Libya and Tunis, where he met the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The meeting followed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's visit last week to the Vatican, where he met with Pope John Paul II. Mr. Rabin asked the Pope to use his moral influence to get the peace process back on track. The pope's spokesman, Joaquín Navarro, said it was "obvious" Mr. Arafat welcomed Pope John Paul II's influence. Mr. Tauran's visit "can help restart the dialogue," Mr. Navarro said. Negotiations broke off after a Jewish settler massacred dozens of Palestinian worshippers in a Hebron mosque Feb. 25. The Vatican and Israel signed a historic agreement Dec. 30 to establish diplomatic relations. The Holy See since then has stepped up its Middle East diplomacy.

Lebanese suspected of attacks on synagogue

ESSEN, Germany (AP) — Five young Lebanese men are suspected of two attacks on a synagogue that serves as a memorial to Jews persecuted by the Nazis, police said Wednesday. The attacks in this Ruhr valley industrial city came two and three days after the Feb. 25 massacre of Palestinians in Hebron, and were suspected to have been revenge for the deaths there. Police said five Lebanese, aged 18 to 23, were suspected of breaking 14 windows at the synagogue on Feb. 27 and of throwing a firebomb on the steps of the building on Feb. 28. The fire did little damage.

Britain rejects Lockerbie trial plan

EDINBURGH (R) — Britain has rejected a new plan for two Libyans accused of blowing up a U.S. Jumbo Jet over Scotland in 1988 to be tried at the international court of justice in the Hague, a legal expert said on Tuesday. Scottish Professor Robert Black said Libya and lawyers for Abdul Baset Ali Mohammedi Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah had accepted a revised version of a plan he devised for them to stand trial in the Hague under Scottish law by Scottish judges. "Unfortunately, this is not an acceptable proposal as far as the British government is concerned," Mr. Black told Reuters.

Turks free human rights delegation in southeast

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Seven Western human rights activists detained in southeast Turkey were released by the authorities on Wednesday after being held for a day, police said. Police said the group was being taken to the town of Siirt after spending the night in Malabadi, about 95 kilometres northeast of Diyarbakir, where they were stopped on Tuesday. A British diplomat said, however, the authorities had told the embassy that the group, which included three Britons, had not been detained, but had spent the night in a state water authority guest-house waiting for a military escort they had requested.

Somali peace talks collapse

NAIROBI (R) — Peace talks among Somali faction leaders in Nairobi collapsed on Wednesday and the U.N. said the "inevitably tragic" failure could lead to new fighting. Lansana Kouyate, special U.N. representative for Somalia, was saddened and angered by the failure of nearly two weeks of talks to agree on a public reconciliation and future political steps. Mr. Kouyate said any pact was doomed by a squabble over who should represent the southern Somali National Movement (SSNM) and it appeared unlikely the impasse would be overcome.

Reno opposes Pollard

WASHINGTON (R) — Attorney General Janet Reno has recommended that President Clinton reject a request for a pardon for confessed Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard, administration officials said Wednesday. They said Mr. Reno's long-awaited recommendation had been sent to the White House Tuesday.

Jounieh blast suspects said linked to LF

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Army units on Wednesday arrested the deputy leader of a right-wing Christian militia in connection with a Feb. 27 church bombing that killed 10 worshippers and revived memories of the civil war terror.

Fuad Malek of the Lebanese Forces (LF) militia was taken for interrogation after judicial authorities issued warrants for the arrest of seven men and two women implicated in the bombing that also wounded 60 people during Sunday sacrament, security officials said.

Christian Voice of Lebanon radio quoted the prosecutor general as saying nine members of the Lebanese Forces bombed the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance at

Jounieh, north of Beirut.

Seven of the nine suspects belonged to the security apparatus of the Lebanese Forces, according to the arrest warrants. Five already are in custody and four, including a woman, remain at large.

Samir Geagea, the Lebanese Forces chief, said Mr. Malek's arrest and suggestions that the group was linked to the bombing were "a political ploy that aims to sabotage the morale of the Christian community through cracking down on their institutions and parties."

Wednesday's developments have increased pressure on Dr. Geagea, a one-time warlord, to drop his opposition to the Syrian-backed government or leave

for exile as other opposition leaders have done since the end of the civil war.

In a telephone interview with the Paris-based Radio Monte Carlo, he denied that any of the suspects was still an active member of his party.

Speaking from his headquarters in Ghidras, in the Christian hinterland north-east of Beirut, he said one of the suspects in custody belonged to the militia but quit four years ago.

The three at large, Dr. Geagea added, also served in the militia before it was disbanded in 1991, but have since left the country. "They no longer have any relationship with the political make up of the Lebanese Forces," he said.

Dr. Geagea complained that an army siege which was imposed on Ghidras two weeks ago was tightened Wednesday and soldiers at checkpoints were preventing visitors from getting into the headquarters.

The prosecutor general said meanwhile one of the four at large, Tony Obied, headed the LF's elite assault force during the 1975-90 civil war.

The Lebanese Forces disarmed in 1990 and has since registered as a political party.

The radio gave the names of the five under arrest as: Jerjes Khoury, Simone Khiriyat, Makram Ali and Julien Fayyad and a woman, Antoinette Shaheen. The others were Rushdi Ra'ad, Jean Shaheen and Vera

Massa, also a woman.

The church bombing was a blow to government efforts to stabilise Lebanon after 15 years of civil war. It also sparked a rash of bombing scares in Beirut and its environs.

Official statements did not mention any possible motive for the bombing.

But some radical Maronite Christians still detest their loss of absolute power to the Muslim majority under a reconciliation charter that ended the civil war.

Christian and Muslim opponents of the Lebanese Forces have suggested that the group sought to capitalise on Christian fears of Islamic domination to regain influence.

Iran says crashed plane was probably shot down

NICOSIA (AP) — Preliminary investigations into the crash of a plane bringing relatives of Iranian diplomats from Moscow to Tehran indicate the aircraft was shot down, Tehran Radio reported an investigator as saying Wednesday.

An unidentified "source" involved in investigations into the March 17 crash said the Iranian C-130 Hercules transport plane was probably shot down when it steered into the war-zone in Nagorno-Karabakh, over which Armenia and Azerbaijan have been fighting for more than six years.

"Preliminary investigations show that the plane did not crash due to technical reasons but was downed," said the source, who had recently returned from the scene of the crash, the radio reported.

Russia's Itar-Tass news agency has cited its own sources as saying the Hercules was flying low and appeared to have exploded in flight in an area where anti-aircraft guns are known to be stationed.

The plane went down near Baluja, 10 kilometres north-west of Nagorno-Karabakh's capital, Stepanakert.

Tehran Radio, monitored in Nicosia, quoted the Iranian investigator as saying the plane suffered technical problems which forced the pilot to drop into contested air space.

"The pilot was forced to direct it to a lower altitude due to the sudden loss of pressure which caused window to break," according to the broadcast.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Tuesday denied reports by Russia's news agency alleging the plane was on a spying mission.

Azerbaijan's Turan news agency has cited Defence Ministry spokesman Mamed Jafarov as saying his country

had intercepted radio transmissions between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia's capital, Yerevan, that showed Armenians shot down the plane.

An Armenian government official has told the Associated Press that the pilot contacted the Yerevan airport and said he was having technical problems. The pilot was told he was flying off course before communication was spoken, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Iranian examiner said that an Iranian team at the crash site had extended its mission "due to the sensitivity of the issue" and said, "we should wait until the final report is released" for all the facts.

The radio said the bodies from the crash were flown into Tehran's Mehrabad airport Tuesday.

The crash killed 19 passengers, most of them wives and children of Iranian diplomats in Moscow, and 13 crew members. They were going to Tehran to celebrate the Iranian new year, which began Monday.

The radio did not specify how many bodies were flown to Tehran.

It said air force commander, Brigadier Mansour Sattari, and Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Vaezi attended a ceremony at the airport, along with the Iranian charge d'affaires in Moscow, who lost all of his family in the tragedy.

Several Azerbaijani warplanes have been shot down over Nagorno-Karabakh as well as at least one helicopter with civilians over the past couple of years.

Iran has been neutral in the war over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian Christian enclave in Muslim Azerbaijan. More than 15,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

Palestinian denies role in German disco bombing

SIDON (AP) — A Palestinian accused by German authorities of the 1986 bombing of a Berlin discotheque which killed two American servicemen denied involvement in the attack Tuesday.

Yasser Chreidi maintained his innocence in the bombing while on trial here for the assassination two years earlier of Libyan dissident Mustafa Ashek in then West Berlin.

"I am a normal Palestinian. I did nothing. Not la Belle. Not Ashek," the smiling defendant, flanked by armed policemen, told reporters in German. He raised his handcuffed hands and flashed a V for victory.

Mr. Chreidi, 34, and fellow Palestinian defendant Ghassan Ayoub, 38, are suspected followers of Abu Nidal, although both denied that in court.

The case against the two came to light following the release of East German Stasi secret police files after the 1989 collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Mr. Chreidi has also been implicated in the bombing of the La Belle dance hall in West Berlin, which also killed a Turkish woman and wounded some 230 people.

The Sidon criminal court was due to issue a verdict in the Ashek assassination case on Feb. 22, but postponed it to examine new evidence.

The case was reopened Tuesday with both suspects denying involvement in the killing during the two-hour session.

The court, which is not prosecuting the defendants for the La Belle bombing, adjourned hearings until April 16.

The April 5, 1986, bombing prompted then-President Ronald Reagan to order air raids against Libya, host and

main backer of Abu Nidal.

During cross-examination by the prosecution, Chreidi said he had only heard of the La Belle bombing from the media.

"I don't know where the club is. I don't know who blew it up. They accused me because I'm a Palestinian active in the community there's in Berlin," he said.

Throughout the trial, Mr. Chreidi has denied killing Ashek despite Mr. Ayoub's earlier admission to police that he and Mr. Chreidi shot Ashek on March 29, 1984, in a West Berlin street using muffled pistols.

In court, Mr. Ayoub denied he made the confession in a lucid state of mind.

"I said that while having a fit," he testified.

Tuesday, Mr. Ayoub had a seizure outside the courthouse and collapsed as police dragged him into the chamber, forcing a one-hour delay in the hearing. His family said the seizure was caused by an ailment resulting from typhoid he suffered about 15 years ago.

Mr. Chreidi, a former butcher from Sidon's Ain Al Hilweh refugee camp, was employed as a driver at the Libyan diplomatic mission in communist East Berlin.

Germany has asked Lebanon to hand Mr. Chreidi over for trial in both cases, but the two countries have no extradition treaty.

Lebanese law allows trials of resident foreigners, including Palestinians, for crimes committed outside the country. Lebanese authorities are also considering prosecution of Mr. Chreidi for the La Belle bombing, and are investigating him in connection with other offenses in southern Lebanon.

Oslo calls meeting on Palestinian police force in Cairo

OSLO, Norway (Agencies) — Norway has called an international meeting on creating a Palestinian police force in hopes of helping Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) push forward peace talks that stalled with the Hebron massacre.

The Norwegian Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that the one-day meeting was set for Thursday in Cairo, Egypt, and that Israel, the PLO, the United States, Russia, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank were among those invited.

The Norwegian Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that the one-day meeting was set for Thursday in Cairo, Egypt, and that Israel, the PLO, the United States, Russia, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank were among those invited.

The PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres were expected.

Negotiations between the PLO and Israel stalled following the Feb. 25 massacre. The PLO has demanded an armed international force to protect the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

"I would expect the international force to be a topic at the meeting," said Norwegian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ingvald Havnen. "This is an effort to get the talks started again."

Norway provided a secret channel for PLO-Israeli talks last year. It also coordinates the efforts of donor countries to establish and fund a Palestinian police force for the occupied territories. It hosted an international meeting on the topic in Oslo in December.

A foreign ministry statement said the Cairo meeting would prepare "for the placement of a Palestinian police force as soon as possible."

Mr. Havnen said he did not know who would attend, apart from a Norwegian team, including foreign ministry adviser Terje Rood Larsen and his wife Mona Juul.

The couple helped brokered secret PLO-Israeli talks in Norway, and are now in the Middle East attempting to break the PLO-Israeli deadlock.

Other countries invited to the Cairo meeting included Britain, Japan, Germany, France, Jordan, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Canada, Tunisia, and South Korea.

The package involves establishing temporary U.N. administration of the discussed Nicosia international airport and the deserted Turkish-occupied Greek Cypriot sector of the tourist resort of Famagusta.

This would enable both communities to use the airport and allow the Greek Cypriot refugee population of Famagusta to return to homes they abandoned after the 1974 Turkish invasion.

Cyprus has been unofficially partitioned since the invasion which was sparked off by an abortive coup by supporters of union with Greece.

Mr. Clark declined to reveal what the sticking point was. But diplomatic sources speaking on condition of anonymity said it involved demands by Mr. Denktash for arrangements that would imply indirect recognition of the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state which is only recognised by Ankara.

Mr. Clark said he hoped the Turkish Cypriot side might accept the package before the end of the month.

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Germany's constitution prevents it from deporting anyone who can prove he or she is threatened with the death sentence.

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One died immediately and the other was in hospital in critical condition. A police spokesman said the injured woman had been seriously ill before herself on fire.

Washington says stand on Jerusalem unchanged

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Dismissing reports of a policy change, the State Department restated Tuesday the U.S. position that the final status of Jerusalem should be decided by the parties in negotiations.

"There has been no change in our position on Jerusalem," State Department spokesman Mike McCurry said. He attributed the confusion to an "erroneous press report" in the region.

He noted that President Bill Clinton had said at a news conference last week that the status of Jerusalem is "a matter of the parties to decide."

The spokesman noted that the only public statement Mr. Clinton has made recently about the status of Jerusalem was his joint press conference with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on March 16.

Quoting Mr. Clinton's response to a question on Jerusalem, Mr. McCurry said "In terms of the resolution of Jerusalem, the position of the United States has not changed, but that is a matter for the parties to decide in accord with

the declaration. It is something to be ultimately decided at a later point. That's what we think should be done."

The spokesman stressed that any news accounts or suggestions that Mr. Clinton said something else are "just flat wrong."

Mr. McCurry pointed out that Ambassador Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace talks, is now in the region.

The spokesman said the U.S. mission is in the region to continue urging the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel to move forward on implementing the declaration of principles and to resolve the questions that are delaying the implementation.

Mr. Ross and his party "are encouraged by the discussions that the parties have had face to face on exactly those issues," Mr. McCurry said.

Palestinian and Israeli negotiators have been meeting in Tunis, and the spokesman added, "we do detect some discernible movement forward."

Turkish Cypriots reject United Nations proposals

NICOSIA (AP) — Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus has rejected the latest U.N. proposals to reunite the war-divided island, a senior U.N. envoy said Wednesday.

"I have not received from the Turkish Cypriot side the agreement that I had hoped for," Joe Clark, the special representative of the U.N. secretary-general, said before leaving for New York.

Mr. Clark, a former Canadian foreign minister, had just completed four days of separate meetings with President Glafcos Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş.

Mr. Clark came to Cyprus Saturday to try to break the deadlock blocking the implementation of confidence-building measures proposed by the United Nations last year as a stepping stone to a general agreement on the reunification of the island.

"I think this is a very reasonable package," Mr. Clark said of the confidence measures. The package involves establishing temporary U.N. administration of the discussed Nicosia international airport and the deserted Turkish-occupied Greek Cypriot sector of the tourist resort of Famagusta.

This would enable both communities to use the airport and allow the Greek Cypriot refugee population of Famagusta to return to homes they abandoned after the 1974 Turkish invasion.

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COLUMN

Palace painting stolen in royal security breach

LONDON (R) — Britain's royal household suffered another security embarrassment when police revealed that a valuable painting had been stolen from Buckingham Palace without anyone noticing. A 22-year-old man who used to work at the palace was charged Tuesday with stealing the 17th century oil painting from a guest bedroom at Queen Elizabeth's London home in January and also with stealing a rose bowl and some silver. Police said the theft only came to light when the painting, valued at up to £20,000 (\$120,000), was offered for sale to a London auctioneer who recognised the scene of a couple seated at a table as part of the queen's royal collection.

The theft of the 23 cm (9 inch) by 19 cm (7 inch) painting by Dutch artist Adrian Van Ostade adds to a growing list of security breaches involving royal palaces and members of the queen's family. Last month thieves broke into the private palace apartments which are home to heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles, making away with a number of personal items including expensive cufflinks. But palace officials played down the significance of the latest incident, saying the 600-room palace in central London is too vast for officials to check every precious painting and antique on a daily basis. "It (the painting) was certainly in place the last time the room was used in November," a palace spokeswoman said. Denying there were any red faces in the royal household over the undiscovered theft, "Inventory checks take place on a regular basis but obviously not every day."

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One died immediately and the other was in hospital in critical condition. A police spokesman said the injured woman had been seriously ill before herself on fire.

He said a political motive could not be ruled out, but added that it would be unusual for such an act to be carried out in a remote place rather than in public. He said the women could also have acted from personal rather than political motives.

A note the woman reportedly had left accused Germany of hostility to the Kurdish people and of supplying arms for Turkey's military attacks on the Kurdish region of eastern Turkey.

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